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A

TREATISE

ON THE

ART of MIDWIFERY.

SETTING FORTH

VARIOUS ABUSES therein,

Especially as to the

PRACTICE with INSTRUMENTS:

THE WHOLE

Serving to put all Rational Inquirers in a fair Way of very safely forming their own Judgment upon the QUESTION;

Which it is best to employ,

In Cases of PREGNANCY and LYING-IN,

A

MAN-MIDWIFE;

OR, A

MIDWIFE.

By Mrs. ELIZABETH NIHELL,

PROFESSED MIDWIFE.

LONDON:

Printed for A. MORLEY, at Gay's-Head, near Beaufort Buildings, in the Strand.

MDCCLX.

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Walter Channing Jr. D

Mar. 18. 1856

TO

All FATHERS, MOTHERS

and likely ſoon to be EITHER.

THOUGH the ſubject of the following ſheets is of ſuch univerſal importance, that it would be difficult to name that human individual, to whom it does not in ſome meaſure relate, you, it doubtleſs, more immediately concerns.

UNDER no protection then ſo properly as yours can a work be put, not

preſumingly calculated to determine your judgment, but only to recommend to you the examination of a point, in which Nature would have ſuch juſt reproaches to make to you, for cruelty to yourſelves, if you was indolently to determine yourſelves either without an examination, or on a blind implicit confidence in others; in others, perhaps, intereſted to miſlead you. This laſt advertence of mine will, more than all that I could offer beſides, prove to you my ſincere unaffected wiſh for your favorable acceptance of this eſſay of mine, on the footing of abſolutely no intereſt but purely yours. And that intereſt how dear! how ſacred! How indiſpenſably ought it to challenge your preference almoſt to any other intereſt of your own, and much more ſurely to any of

others!

HAPPILY then for you, in a matter of ſuch common concernment to human-kind, Nature has not been ſo unjuſt, nor ſo unprovident as to place a competent notion of it out of the reach of common ſenſe.

DEIGN then, for your own ſakes, to examine it by that light of Reaſon, the ſpring of which is for ever in yourſelves. It cannot fail of affording you a ſufficient certainty on which to reſt your opinion, in a point upon which it is of ſuch deep, ſuch tender importance to you, not to form your reſolutions on a wrong one. In virtue of ſuch your own fair examination, the deciſion will no longer be dangerouſly and precariouſly that of others for you, no longer be nothing better than a lightly adopted prejudice, but become truly and meritori-

ouſly the genuine reſult of your own judgment.

But whatever your deciſion may be, at leaſt to me you can hardly impute it as an offence, my ſeeking to ſupply you with matter, whereon to exerciſe that judgment of yours in ſo intereſting a point. At the worſt, I have the conſolation of being in my duty, while thus aiming, however deficiently, at proving that with the moſt tender regard and unfeigned zeal.

I am, reſpectfully,

Your moſt devoted, and

moſt faithful humble ſervant,

Haymarket,
Feb. 21, 1760.

Elizabeth Nihell.

PREFACE.

THE preſervation of ſo valuable a part of the human Species as pregnant women, as well as that of their dear and tender charge, their children, ſo powerfully recommended by the voice of Nature and Reaſon, to all poſſible human providence for their ſafe birth, forms an object ſo ſenſibly intitled to the private and national care, and even to that of univerſal ſociety, that all enforcement of its importance would be an injury to the human underſtanding, or at leaſt to the human heart. It would look too like imagining that it could be wanted.

WHAT I have then to ſay preliminarily, muſt chiefly ariſe from my own due ſenſe of my inequality to the ſubject of which I

preſume to treat. Though, if example could be any countenance, I might plead that of ſo many authors who have, with the utmoſt confidence and the utmoſt abſurdity, written upon the art of midwifery, without underſtanding any thing at all of it. The truth is, that my very natural and ſtrong attachment to the profeſſion, which I have long exerciſed and actually do exerciſe, created in me an unſuppreſſible indignation at the errors and pernicious innovations introduced into it, and every day gaining ground, under the protection of Faſhion, ſillily foſtering a preference of men to women in the practice of midwifery: a preference firſt admitted by credulous Fear, and admitted without examination, upon the ſo ſuſpicious recommendation of thoſe intereſted to make that Fear ſubſervient to their ſelfiſh ends.

Of theſe diſorders, pernicious as they are to ſociety, I have however been long withheld from taking public notice by far from groundleſs ſcruples. Being myſelf a practitioner, I had juſt reaſon to fear, that my repreſentation would have the leſs influence

fluence, from a ſuppoſition of perſonal intereſt in them. They might naturally enough be conſtrued as the reſult of a jealouſy of profeſſion. I had yet a reaſon more particular to myſelf againſt interfering in this matter. My huſband is unhappily for me a ſurgeon-apothecary: I ſay unhappily, becauſe though of a buſineſs I maintain to be ſo foreign and diſtinct from the function which I profeſs, there might not be wanting, among ſuch as would imagine their private intereſt attempted at leaſt to be hurt by me, a ſuſpicion that I was indirectly aiming at recommending his advantage in prejudice to theirs. Yet ſo far, ſo very far is this from being the caſe, that the main ſcope of my eſſay is to prove, that his buſineſs has no relation at all to mine, and that eſpecially as to the particular point I would wiſh to eſtabliſh, he is abſolutely as indifferent to me as any other perſon, either of his own profeſſion, or of any other whatſoever. This prejudice then of ſelf-intereſt being fairly annulled by the appeal to the manifeſt drift of the work itſelf, which gives him as formally the excluſion as to any other of his ſex, I had ſtill a repugnance to the entering into a diſcuſſion of abuſes, that could

could not be laid open without expoſing truths, that might have an air of invidiouſneſs or detraction.

Some friends of mine, to whom I communicated my doubts, agreed with me, that there are faults which cannot innocently be revealed, where their manifeſtation may be attended with ſome greater evil, but that it could not be right to rank among the faults to be ſpared any error in an art, where one ſingle falſe idea, ſuffered to ſubſiſt, may prove the occaſion of wounds or torturous death to thouſands. On the contrary, the due knowledge of faults of this nature is, in fact, a public benefit. They ſerve, as one may ſay, for beacons to the art, they hold a light to it, and ſhow it the rocks it ſhould avoid.

It is certain then, that I have not the leaſt intention to attack any particular perſons, any farther than in what I conceive to be falſe theory, or miſpractice in the art I profeſs; I hope then it will not be imputed to me as unfair or over-preſumptuous, if I eſpecially do not over-reſpect writers

writers or practitioners, who themſelves have not reſpected either common-ſenſe or common-humanity.

HAVE not ſome of our modern authors, eſpecially the male-practitioners, who in theſe later times have treated of midwifery, added new and worſe errors of their own to thoſe bequeathed to us by the antients, whom they have inſulted, as they themſelves will probably one day be, but with more reaſon, by their ſucceſſors, if the world ſhould continue blind enough for them to have any in this profeſſion? One would even imagine, that in the criticiſms in which they indulge themſelves of one another's ſiſtems and inſtruments, they are inflicting part of the puniſhment due for their common offences againſt Nature, in the abuſe of an Art, originally intended to aſſiſt her. At the ſame time, even from their own ſhowing, nothing can be plainer, than that their boaſted inventions have, under the ſpecious pretence of improvement, fallen from bad to worſe, as is ever the caſe of ſuperſtructures on the crazy foundation of falſe principles.

READ

READ the men-writers on this art, and you will find interſperſed in moſt of them, amidſt the moſt flagrant proofs of their own ignorance of it, reproaches to that of the midwives, too juſt, perhaps as to ſome, but ſhameleſsly abſurd in them, who to that ignorance ſubſtitute their own ſubtilities of theory, which, when reduced to practice, are infinitely worſe than any deficiency in ſome particular female-practitioners; being moſtly, in truth, fit for nothing ſo much, as to prepare dreadful work for their inſtruments.

BUT if they ſo falſely exalt their own learning above the ignorance of women; they have their reaſon for it. They ſeek to drive out of the practice thoſe who ſtand in the way of their private intereſt: that private intereſt, to which the public one is for ever ſacrificed under the ſpecious and ſtale pretext of its advancement.

CAN it then be wrong in any of our ſex and profeſſion to endeavour, at leaſt, to juſtify ourſelves, and to undeceive the public, of the ill and falſe impreſſions which have been given it of our talents and ability? Pernicious prejudices have ſometimes their

run

run, like epidemical diſtempers: and ſurely it is more for the ſervice of mankind, that their duration ſhould be ſhortened, than ſuffered to proceed without at leaſt an endeavour to oppoſe them.

I SHOULD, however, be much more pleaſed with an exemption from the diſagreeable taſk of compoſing the apology of our ſex in this matter, it being contrary to that modeſty which becomes us ſo well; but as the men-midwives, in their ſiſtem of exalting their powers of Art over ours of Nature, keep no meaſures with truth, I ſee myſelf forced to do juſtice to our function, and to manifeſt the unreaſonableneſs of that contempt, with which they treat and depreciate our ſervices; and with which they have, in favor of their own intereſt, perhaps too ſucceſsfully imbued the public.

IN this attempt of mine there is no blamable oſtentation. If I ſet in their juſt light of utility the qualifications of the women of our profeſſion, as to induſtry, dexterity, eaſe of execution, patience, conſtitutional tenderneſs, and eſpecially natu-

ral

ral aptitude, it is no more than practical truth warrants, and the throwing a due light into the matter of compariſon requires. Yet I do not wiſh, that we ſhould paſs for any thing beyond what we really are. All the partiality, all the tender feelings it is ſo natural for me to have for the ſufferings of my own ſex, would be ſufficient to with-hold me from deſiring to eſtabliſh any opinion or practice tending to endanger the perſonal ſafety of women in child-birth, or of any thing ſo dear to them as their children. I am myſelf a mother.

I OWN however there are but too few midwives who are ſufficiently miſtreſſes in their profeſſion. In this they are ſome of them but too near upon a level with the men-midwives, with this difference however in favor of the female practitioners, that they are incapable of doing ſo much actual miſchief as the male-ones, oftener more ignorant than themſelves, but who with leſs tenderneſs and more raſhneſs go to work with their inſtruments, where the ſkill and management of a good midwife would

would have probably prevented the difficulty, or even after its coming into exiſtence, prove more efficacious towards ſaving both mother and child; always with due preference however to the mother.

I WILL alſo, with the ſame candor, own that there are ſome not intirely incapable men-midwives: but they are ſo very rare, and muſt for ever neceſſarily be ſo, and even, at the beſt, ſo inferior to good midwives, that a worſe office could ſcarce be done to mankind, that on ſo falſe a ſuppoſition as that of a ſufficient ability in them, to explode the practice of the art by women, becauſe ſome of them might be exceptionable. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe, than that ſome ſhould be more deficient than others? is there that art in the world, to which the ſame objection does not lie of different degrees of merit in the profeſſors of it, as well as that of the imperfection of all human arts in general?

IN the mean time, the conſequences of this unfair concluſion againſt the women profeſſors of midwifery, in affording the men

men a plea for ſupplanting them, do not hitherto appear very advantageous ones to the public. It remains, I fancy, to be proved, that population is any gainer by the diminution of that evil, to which the inſtruments or other methods of practice, employed by the men, are pretended to be ſuch a remedy.

To examine this point is the object of the following ſheets; the work being divided into two parts.

The firſt treats of our title to the practice of this art, of the pleas uſed by the men for arrogating to themſelves the preference, of the knowledge of Anatomy, of the neceſſity of the inſtruments, of the incapacity of women, of the Faſhion: and whether the ſuperior ſafety is on the ſide of employing men-practitioners.

The anſwers inſerted to each objection, all together, conſtitute an eſſay to remove the prejudices, which have been ſo induſtriouſly, and too ſucceſsfully diſſeminated againſt the female practice of this art; and

to

to ſhow that the ſubſtitution of the men, more eſpecially of their iron and ſteel-implements, is attended with greater danger, greater miſchiefs, than thoſe which that ſubſtitution is pretended to prevent or redreſs.

The ſecond has more particularly for object to demonſtrate the inſufficiency, danger, and actual deſtructiveneſs of inſtruments in the art of midwifery. To this purpoſe I therefore paſs all that is needful of them in review, in the ſeveral caſes, in which the antients and moderns would perſuade us they are neceſſary. I ſet myſelf to eſtabliſh my exceptions to them by unconteſtable examples; but above all, by the authority of reaſon and experience. I take notice of ſome of the manifeſt contradictions to be met with in almoſt all the authors, to one another. I have ventured to ſubjoin ſome obſervations, taken from my own obſervations and practice, in lieu of what I condemn, and to point out a method of operation, much more plain, more tender, more ſecure, than the one by inſtruments. I ſupport this by thoſe gener-

al principles, which have happily guided me on all occaſions, and from which it is even eaſy to refute the pretentions and ſiſtem of the inſtrumentarians, in which I ſhall note here only three eſſential defects.

THE *firſt*, in that the origin of the men, inſinuating themſelves into the practice of midwifery, has abſolutely no foundation in the plea of ſuperior ſafety, and, conſequently, can have no right to exact ſo great a ſacrifice as that of decency and modeſty.

THE *ſecond*, for that they were reduced firſt to forge the phantom of incapacity in the women, and next the neceſſity of murderous inſtruments, as ſome color for their mercenary intruſion. And, in truth, the faculty of uſing thoſe inſtruments is the ſole tenure of their uſurped office.

THE *third*, their diſagreement among themſelves about, which are the inſtruments to be preferred; a doubt which, the practices tried upon the lives and limbs of

ſo

ſo many women and children truſted to them, have not yet, it ſeems, reſolved, even to this day.

But reſerving to treat upon theſe and other points more at large, in their place, I am to beſpeak the reader's candid conſtruction, of my having, eſpecially in the beginning of the firſt part, tranſiently availed myſelf of the authorities of authors, ſacred and prophane. It is leſs that I think truth ſtands in need of ſuch corroboratives, than to ſhow that it is not deſtitute of them. It is not by authority, but by reaſon, that truth, in matters of temporal concernment, claims acceptance from reaſonable beings. At the worſt, thoſe to whom they may preſent a tireſome proſpect, have but to ſkip them over; or if they peruſe them, they are deſired not to forget that no ſtreſs is laid on them, beyond their being anſwers to arguments of the like nature, urged on the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion.

THOUGH inſtruments are not within my ſphere of practice; though conſequently I have the honor of not being perſonally very well acquainted with them, nor have I at hand all the original authors who have publiſhed their own inventions of them, I have been ſufficiently enabled to do juſtice to their pretentions, by a recourſe to thoſe who profeſſedly and fully treat of them. My guide is commonly Monſieur Levret, who is one of the exacteſt deſcribers of them. Not moſt certainly that I otherwiſe prefer him, for of the utility of his forceps I think juſt as ill as I do of all the reſt.

I SHOULD have been glad to avoid at once the barren drineſs of abridgments furniſhing no diſtinct ideas, and the tedious exactneſs of particularized deſcriptions and hiſtories; as for example, of the forceps, as well as of errors committed by practitioners; but this medium I could rather wiſh than hope to keep. I have then been ſo afraid of obſcuring matters by brevity, that of the two I have perhaps run too far into

into the contrary and leſs agreeable exceſs: which, however, in conſideration of its favoring explicitneſs, is not perhaps the moſt inexcuſable one.

I WISH I could make an apology as receivable by a reader, who will doubtleſs be juſtly diſguſted at the repetitions I have too little ſcrupled the making of the ſame thoughts, and even ſometimes of the ſame expreſſions. Yet I dare beſpeak, from his candor, ſome indulgence to the confeſſion of a fault, it will eaſily be perceived I could not well eſcape, without the worſe inconvenience to himſelf, of his being perplexed with references back to paſt pages, beſides, that ſometimes a chain of argument would be broke, conſequently weakened, by the ſuppreſſion of ſome link of it, on account of the matter having been elſewhere already employed in other connexions.

UPON the whole, I throw myſelf, with the more confidence, on the favorable acceptance of the public, from my conſciouſneſs of its not being but with the beſt intentions

intentions for the good of ſociety that I hazard this production: and have therefore reaſon to hope, that it will occaſionally be remembered, that my object is purely that of repreſenting a truth, and not of recommending a compoſition.

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A

TREATISE

ON

MIDWIFERY.

WHOEVER conſiders the abſolute neceſſity of the art of midwifery, will readily allow it a place among the capital ones in the primeval times of the world. All the other arts are no further neceſſary to man, than to procure him the conveniencies or luxuries of life; that of midwifery is of indiſpenſable neceſſity to his living at all, imploring as he does its aid for his introduction into life. Without this art the earth itſelf muſt ſoon become diſpeopled and a deſert,

whereas by means of it men have been multiplied, with inconceivable rapidity.

In conformity to its claim of importance, this art appeared in all its luſtre among the Jews, the Egyptians, the Athenians and Romans, and indeed in all nations during thouſands of ages. Nor was the confinement of the exerciſe of it to women deemed any derogation to it. It even gave honor to its profeſſors of that ſex. Socrates, ſo ennobled by his character of being the greateſt philoſopher in all antiquity, did not diſdain to boaſt himſelf the ſon of a very able midwife Phanarete, as may be ſeen in Plato's book on ſcience, in Diogenes Laertius and others.

Among the Egyptians and the Greeks it cannot be hard to conceive what emulation, what ardor it muſt have excited among the women of that profeſſion, the cuſtom of diſtributing prizes to thoſe of the greateſt merit in it, in the face of the people. No one is ignorant of the power of honors and diſtinction to bring arts to perfection.

But

BUT from the inſtant the midwives ſunk into diſ-eſteem, and wherever that has happened, it will be found by woeful experience, that not only the art itſelf has ſuffered in the very midſt of the moſt falſely boaſted improvements, but that human-kind itſelf has much and very juſtly to complain of the change.

THE native inconſtancy and levity of the French nation opened the firſt inlet, in theſe modern-times, to men-practitioners. In antient hiſtory we meet with but one feeble attempt of that ſort, which however ſoon gave way to the united powers of modeſty and common ſenſe. In France, and may it not be the ſame caſe ſoon here! the women of a competent claſs of life and education, begin to decline forming themſelves for this profeſſion, as beneath them, conſidering the ſlight put upon thoſe women who exerciſe it.

NOR has this injuſtice remained unpuniſhed. Many women have found, by ſe-

vere experience, their having been enemies to themſelves, in abandoning or ſlighting thoſe of their own ſex, from whom, at their greateſt need, they uſed to receive the moſt effectual ſervice, and who alone are capable of diſcharging their duty by them, with that ſympathy for their pains, that tender affectionate concern, which may ſo naturally be expected from thoſe who have been, are, or may be ſubject to the ſame infirmities.

MANY out of a diſtruſt inſpired them of midwives, have thrown themſelves into the hands of men, who have promiſed them infinitely more than they were able to perform; and who behind all the tender alluring words, of ſuperior ſkill and ſafety in the employing of them, conceal the ideas with which they are full, of cutting, hacking, plucking out piece-meal, or tearing limb from limb.

THE murder of ſo many children, the fruits of their bowels, might, one would imagine, have induced mothers to conſider

der this point a little more carefully. Yet, through the prevalence of groundleſs fears, and of imaginary dangers they have run into real ones, and have ſometimes found their death preciſely where they ſought their life; and not ſeldom where nature has even favored them enough in their labor, for them not to need any extraordinary miniſtry of art, the men have put them to cruel and dangerous tortures.

NOTWITHSTANDING ſome examples, and many violent preſumptions of ſuch mal-treatment, too many women have been ſo miſerably miſled by faſhion, as to prefer the betraying the cauſe of their own ſex, and the ſubjecting themſelves to thoſe who deceive them with falſe hopes, to the entruſting their preſervation to thoſe of their own ſex, in the hands of which the care of it has been for ſo many ages, with ſo much reaſon, and ſuch little cauſe of complaint.

YET we do not ſee that any of theſe men-midwifes have been capable of forming a good midwife. On the contrary, we ſee,

that in order to remedy the abuſes, or rather to prevent the fatal accidents which every day occur in the practice of a profeſſion ſo neceſſary to the preſervation of the human ſpecies, they were in France obliged to have recourſe to one of the ableſt midwives in that kingdom, who was placed at the head of the practice in the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, to preſide over the lyings-in there, and to found and cultivate that inexhauſtible ſeminary of excellent female practitioners, who have actually reſtored the art to its antient degree of eſteem, with all fair judges. Theſe worthy proficients have been ſo public-ſpirited, as to communicate their talents and knowledge to a number of ſurgeons, who never had any reaſon to be aſhamed of the leſſons they aſſiduouſly took from the midwives, unleſs indeed for themſelves not being able to come up to them in the practice, ſo true it is, that the buſineſs is not at all natural to them.

YET have even many of thoſe very men-practitioners, influenced by that ſelf-intereſt which has ſuch a power in all human

man affairs, revolted againſt their miſtreſſes in the art, and their benefactreſſes. They have, at various times, commenced lawſuits, about the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, in order to get the lyings-in there committed to them: but the adminiſtrators, the perſons of a juſt ſenſe of things, together with the parliament of that town, ever attentive to decency, without excluding the due regard to the preſervation of the ſubjects, have conſtantly oppoſed and fruſtrated the pretentions of theſe innovators. Theſe again thus diſappointed, were forced to content themſelves with practiſing upon ſome women of quality, under the favor and protection of ſome of the old ladies of the court of Lewis XIV. who had their reaſons for propagating this faſhion. And now theſe innovators, not without a due proportion of ingratitude to the injuſtice, began to run down the midwives, and exalt themſeves. The novelty prevailed, and the contagion of example ſoon communicated itſelf to the provinces, and thence into neighbouring nations. A few men perhaps of real abilities, but governed by the moſt ſordid intereſt, aſſociated

to their party a number of the moſt ignorant and unexpert practitioners, but who ſerved to fill up the cry, and made a common cauſe againſt the midwives, whoſe pretended inſufficiency was now to be pleaded in favor of themſelves being admitted to ſupplant them. Nor was the concurrent atteſtation in their favor, of ſo many ages, during which the practice was entirely in female hands, to weigh any thing againſt the boaſts of their own ſuperior ability. They picked up and ſounded loud a few real inſtances perhaps, and undoubtedly many falſe ones of faults of practice in women: though were the numbers of human creatures, who have barbarouſly periſhed by the unſkilfulneſs of the practitioners, to be fairly liquidated, it would appear that fewer have been the victims of female ignorance, than of the preſumption and indexterity of the men. The women are undoubtedly liable to error: there have even been monſters of iniquity among them, but certainly in no number to form a general prejudice againſt them: but as to the men they are all of them, as will be more fully demonſtrated hereafter, naturally incapable of the exerciſe of

of this profeſſion. A hiſtory of their murders might even be collected out of the books written by them to eſtabliſh their ſuperiority over the women. From Deventer, Mauriceau, and the moſt celebrated of their writers, amongſt many excellent obſervations in the way of the chirurgical art, many of the groſſeſt abſurdities have eſcaped, where they tranſgreſs its bounds and go into that of midwifery. Some of thoſe abſurdities too are ſo glaring, that they have not even been overlooked by themſelves.

MANY perſons in Holland, having ſet up for men-midwives, without being duly qualified, the government thought proper to interfere, and conſequently there was an ordinance iſſued on the 31ſt of January, 1747, by which it was enjoined, that no one ſhould practiſe in the quality of man-midwife, or exerciſe this art, unleſs he were eſpecially authorized for this function, by a certificate of his having undergone a ſufficient examination before capable and intelligent judges for that purpoſe appointed.

It will appear, in the ſequel of this work, that it were to be wiſhed, for the ſake of the good that would redound from it, to the preſervation of the human ſpecies, both in parent and child, that thoſe who are entruſted with the public welfare, would eſtabliſh the ſame regulation in the Britiſh dominions, to expel and exclude from the art all the ignorant pretenders of either ſex, who are, in fact worſe than the Herods of ſociety. The cruelty of Herod extended to no more than to the infants; not to the mothers; that of ſuch pretenders to both.

If their conduct was to be examined with attention, how many fatal miſtakes would be diſcovered in the practitioners of both ſexes? But I dare aver it more in the men than in the women-practitioners. With what horror would not there in theſe be remarked, tearings, rendings, and tortures of no uſe to which they put both the mother and the child? One, upon ſome moſt learnedly erroneous hypotheſis, pulls and hauls the arm of an innocent in-

fant

fant yet living, ſo that he plucks it off; or repels it with ſuch violence, that he breaks it: another unmercifully opens the infant's head, and takes the brain out: ſome bring the whole away piece-meal: operations often to be defended only by hard words and harder hearts.

NOR need this procedure aſtoniſh. Every thing is at the diſpoſal, I had almoſt ſaid, at the mercy of theſe excutioners: but have they any? all their handy-work is tranſacted in private, and remains buried in the tomb of oblivion. The parents ſuſpecting nothing, think every thing has been done, according to art, that is to ſay, very right. The operator thinks he has done nothing but his duty, and is highly ſatisfied with himſelf, after he has ordered ſome draughts for his patient. The magiſtrate knows no injury done to the ſubject, or is inſenſible to the conſequences from the ſame ſpirit of confidence. In the mean time, a huſband loſes a fine child, or a beloved wife, perhaps both; children, a tender mother, and if they are of the ſame ſex, have the ſame fate to dread for themſelves. The man-

man-midwife is clear, for only ſaying, that he has done all for the beſt. But this is probably true too, as to the intention; but as to the fact, it ſhall be ſhewn that there is often great reaſon to doubt it.

Be this obſerved, without offence to the few able men-midwives who are maſters enough of the buſineſs, not to deſerve the reproaches due to by much the greater number of raſh and ignorant pretenders to it: whoſe practice, well examined, would bring to light ſuch terrible truths, as would alarm even the legiſlature to provide a remedy againſt the danger.

In contradiction to this, it may be urged, that the practice by women is ſuſceptible upon that account, of ſuperior objections. That remains now to be examined. The chief object of this work being a fair diſcuſſion, which of the two ſexes is the moſt appropriated by nature and art, to the exerciſe of this function.

To this end, I ſhall preſent, in a candid view, the two opinions which, on this point, divide the Engliſh yet more than they

they do the French. Moſt of the ſurgeons, all the men-midwives, no doubt, many apothecaries, a number of women and nurſes maintain, that midwifery is the buſineſs of the men: whilſt on the other hand, the beſt part of the able phyſicians, with many other perſons of both ſexes, defend the contrary ſide of the queſtion, and inſiſt on this art being, for many invincible reaſons, ſolely the province of female practitioners.

NOT to loſe ſight of the fundamental arguments and proofs brought to ſupport reſpectively theſe two opinions, I ſhall place them in parallel with one another, in form of objections and anſwers. The objections made to women-practitioners precede the anſwers. If the men-midwives, or their partizans, ſhall think I have omitted any thing that makes for them, or againſt us, or have any ſtronger or more eſſential arguments to oppoſe, I ſhall endeavour to ſatisfy them.

Objection the First.

Regard ought to be paid to prior poſſeſſion. The art of midwifery being a branch of the art of phyſic, muſt have been originally in the hands of man, the inventor of all arts.

ANSWER.

The juſt deference ſo univerſally paid to holy writ will, I preſume, allow no prejudice to be found againſt my availing myſelf of thoſe inferences and deciſions to be drawn from it, which are ſo agreeable to the eternal laws of common ſenſe.

If the arts and ſciences, acquired by experience, and by acts often repeated, had, as they certainly were not invented by men only, that could not at leaſt be ſaid of thoſe acts of the human life, which are indiſpenſably neceſſary to its preſervation. Such faculties may with more propriety be termed inſtinctive, than invented ones. The faculties of eating, of drinking, of lying

lying down to reſt, common to both ſexes, are not perhaps more natural, more matter of inſtinct, than the faculty of one woman aſſiſting another in her labor-pains being appropriated to the female ſex.

THERE is no occaſion to give one's imagination the torture to account for Eve's delivering herſelf of her firſt children. There is no reaſon to eſtabliſh it as an abſolute neceſſity that Adam ſhould have aſſiſted Eve in her firſt lyings-in; whoſe labor-pains might not only be leſs ſevere, than they afterwards became in accompliſhment for the curſe pronounced on the human race for the ſin of thoſe firſt parents, but alſo more conſonant to piety, to believe that God, being the beſt of fathers, infuſed into Eve knowledge ſufficient of the manner of delivering herſelf; a manner more natural and more conformable to the ideas of that decency imprinted with his own hand in the human heart, in no point more ſtrongly, nor more univerſally, than in this matter of the women lying-in, when both men and women have an equal repugnance to the interpoſition of any aſſiſtance, but that of the female

male ſex, to which the faculty of miniſtering in that caſe ſeems innate.

But admitting even that Adam, for the want of females for that function, before the daughters of Eve were grown up to a capacity of it, actually did aſſiſt Eve, in the ſeaſons of her delivery; that would eſtabliſh no inference of right for the future: ſince we know that their children and deſcendents in time following did not make uſe of men to lay the women.

In Geneſis, chap. xxxv. ver. 17. there is mention made of Rachel's midwife. In the ſame book, chap. xxxviii. ver. 27, and 28. we ſee they were intelligent midwives. Thamar being with child. "It came to "paſs in the time of her travail, that be-"hold, twins were in her womb."

Ver. 28. "And it came to paſs that "when ſhe travailed, that the one put "out his hand, and the *Midwife* took "and bound upon his hand a ſcarlet "thread, ſaying, this came out firſt."

And

And here I intreat the reader not to impute to me any idea ſo abſurd as that of meaning to defend an erroneous practice ſolely from the antiquity of it; I intend nothing further by this citation, than to prove the antiquity itſelf, which if not deciſive in favor of the practice by women, can at leaſt be no prejudice againſt it.

Objection the Second.

The art of midwifery being equally noble for its ſubject as for its end, ſince it is the only one which enjoys the prerogative of ſaving, at one operation of the hand, more than one individual at once; ought the leſs noble ſex to diſpute pre-eminence in it with the men? On tracing things back to the remoteſt diſtance of times, it muſt be allowed, that if the women, through a miſtaken modeſty, in thoſe times of ignorance and ſimplicity, commonly made uſe of midwives, it may be preſumed there were alſo men-practitioners employed in difficult caſes.

ANSWER.

READILY granting that the art is a noble one; noble in its ſubject and ends: all that I am ſurpriſed at is, that the men did not find it out ſooner. Probably the nobility of this art is only begun to be founded ſo high by the men, till they diſcovered the poſſibility of making it a lucrative one to themſelves. Then indeed the ignorance and incapacity of the poor women for it, came all of a ſudden to be doubted and deſpiſed. The art with all its nobility was for ſo many ages thought beneath the exerciſe of the noble ſex: it was held unmanly, indecent, and they might ſafely have added impracticable for them. But had even any of the medical profeſſion not thought ſo, there is great reaſon to think the reſt of mankind would have viewed their intereſted endeavors to uſurp this province from the female ſex, in the light they deſerve. It was only for the eternal fondneſs which prevails among the French for novelties, that paved the way for the admiſſion of ſo dangerous and indecent an one, as that of mens making a common practice of midwifery, and taking

ing it out of the womens hands, to which it was ſo much more natural.

I AM here far from wiſhing to enter into a conteſt with the men, on the ſuperiority and excellence they aſſume over the women; though not quite ſo indiſputable perhaps as is commonly imagined. All that I contend for, to the purpoſe of the preſent queſtion, is, that there are certain employments and vocations, which are generally and naturally more proper for one ſex than for another. A woman would ſeem to aim at ſomething above her ſex, that would ſet up an academy for teaching to fence, or ride the great horſe: but a man ſinks beneath his ſex, who interferes in the female province. It is not with quite ſo good a grace as a woman that he would ſpin, make beds, pickle and preſerve, or officiate as a midwife. Be this obſerved without impeachment of the ſuperiority of men.

OPEN books, ſacred and profane, you will find that the Egyptians were not ſo ſimple as Dr. Smellie would give us to un-

derſtand they were; when in the beginning of his introduction, pages 1ſt and 2d, he grants us, out of his ſpecial grace and favor, "that in the firſt ages the "practice of the art of midwifery was "*altogether* in the hands of women, and "that men were never employed but "in the utmoſt extremity: indeed (ſays "he) it is natural to ſuppoſe, that while "the *ſimplicity* of the early ages remained, "women would have recourſe to none "but perſons of their own ſex, in diſ-"eaſes *peculiar* to it: accordingly we find "that in Egypt midwifery was practiſed "by women."

ACCORDING to ſcripture, however, the ſorcerers of Egypt were not ſo very ſimple neither, ſince they had art enough to imitate ſome of the miracles of Moſes, in transforming their rods into ſerpents, blood into water, and covering the land with frogs *. All this did not ſavor of ſimplicity.

* Exod. Chap. vii. and viii.

THE

THE Egyptians * have ever paſſed for the moſt intelligent and enlightened of all the other nations of the earth, who reſpected them as oracles of wiſdom and ſound philoſophy. They are the firſt people who eſtabliſhed ſyſtematically rules of good government. This profound and ſerious nation ſaw early the true end of human policy; and virtue being the principal foundation and cement of all ſociety, they induſtriouſly cultivated it. At the head of all virtues they placed that of gratitude. The honor attributed to them of being the moſt grateful of men, ſhews that they were alſo the moſt ſocial. They had an inventive genius: their Mercuries, who filled Egypt with ſurpriſing diſcoveries, ſcarce left any thing wanting to the perfection of their underſtanding, or to the convenience and happineſs of life. The firſt people among whom libraries were known to exiſt, is that of Egypt. In ſhort, ſo far from being ſimple or ignorant, they excelled in all the ſciences. There were indeed among them

* Diod. Sic. Herodotus.

no *men-midwives*; but to make up for this deficiency, they had, it ſeems, excellent midwives.

BESIDES it is even ridiculous to confine the practice of midwifery by females only to early ages. Who does not know, that it was ſo in all ages, and in all countries, till juſt the preſent one, in which the innovation has crept into ſomething of a faſhion into two or three countries. The exceptions before, or any where elſe, to the general rule, are ſo few, that they are ſcarce worth mentioning.

BUT to return to the ſo *ſimple* Egyptians. We read in Exodus, chap. i. v. 15. and following, that Pharaoh ſaid to the midwives, "When ye do the office of "midwife to the Hebrew women, and "ſet them upon the ſtools, if it be a ſon "then ye ſhall kill him, but if it be a "daughter ſhe ſhall live.

"17. But the midwives feared God, "and did not as the king of Egypt com-"manded

" manded them, but ſaved the men-chil-
" dren alive."

THE king reproached them, as may be ſeen in the ſame place.

WHY did not Pharaoh give the ſame order to the men-midwives, if there had been any ſuch employed in difficult or extraordinary pains? (as Mr. Smellie ſuppoſes.) Or rather, if the king had not thought it too unnatural for women to be delivered by men, he certainly would not have failed to have commanded it, eſpecially on perceiving that the midwives had deceived him. This would have been a fine occaſion to have forbidden them their function, and for the men-practitioners to have come into vogue. The men would certainly have been of the two not the improperest to have executed the intentions of the tyrant: as tender-heartedneſs is ſurely not more the character of their ſex, than of the women. Beſides, their inſtruments would have ſerved admirably to have thinned the ſpecies, without diſtinction of the ſexes. They might alſo

have concealed the barbarity of the murders by such instruments, under the pretext of their necessity from hard-labors, as the midwives excused their disobedience under that of easy ones, which had rendered their aid superfluous.

Objection the Third.

So many authors as have wrote on the art of midwifery, from the age in which Hippocrates florished, whom we look on as the first and father of the men-midwives, with the disciples whom he formed, and their successors, do not they satisfactorily prove the antiquity of man-midwives?

ANSWER.

As for satisfactorily, no. It can only be concluded from this objection, that the ignorance of the pretended men-midwives is very antient; and yet posterior by much to the function of the midwives, since that is coeval with the world itself, embraces all times, extends through all parts of the earth, whereas we hear nothing of the other till the times of Hippocrates.

NEVERTHELESS I greatly reſpect Hippocrates, and all the authors who have treated of this art. Some thanks are due to them, though but from thoſe whom they have ſet to work in our days. Conſider but the moſt celebrated authors among them down to our times, there may be found in them great progreſſes by degrees, eſpecially in our modern writers on this ſubject. Yet the moſt intelligent of them feel and confeſs that the matter is yet far from exhauſted. For after having ſtudied all the treatiſes we have upon it, there may, there muſt be perceived an aberration and emptineſs with which the underſtanding remains unſatisfied, and feels that much is yet wanting to the requiſite perfection.

Notwithſtanding likewiſe the veneration confeſſedly due to Hippocrates, I cannot diſpenſe myſelf from ſaying the truth; he might be and doubtleſs was an excellent phyſician: he has wrote upon all the female diſorders, and on the means of delivering them; he may have been conſulted

in

in his time, but he can never pass for an able man-midwife. His writings contain some violent remedies and strange prescriptions for women in labor, which must be the produce of the most dangerous ignorance of what is proper for them in that condition.

This author was also evidently ignorant of what concerns preternatural deliveries, as indeed were his successors till the beginning of the last century.

To prove what I advance, there needs no recourse back to very remote times: it will be sufficient to peruse the treatises of Ambrose Paræus, Jacques Guillimeau, Peter-Paul Bienassis, printed 1602, and even that of De la Motte, who is of this century, to own, that the practice of the men-midwives was far from having attained any degree of perfection.

The manner in which the antients proceeded, when the child presented in an untoward situation, is a fully convincing proof

proof thereof; ſince they obſtinately, in ſuch caſes, continued their efforts to reduce it to its natural ſituation, in ſpite of a thouſand difficulties and dangers, inſtead of bringing it away footling, as is now done by all who underſtand the right practice.

HIPPOCRATES is the firſt who diſcovered that wonderful ſecret of killing the child, and bringing it away piece-meal from the mother's womb. He adviſes it, in the manner taken notice of by Dr. Smellie, in his introduction, (page 10. & ſeq.) I do not know whether it is from that branch of practice that he adopts him for "the father of midwifery" (p. 4.) but, what is certain is, that Galen, and all the ſucceſſors of Hippocrates, till towards the end of the laſt century, exactly followed his method of not delivering women in hard labors, but by the means of murderous inſtruments. I ſhall not here detain myſelf with rehearſing the long legend Mr. Smellie gives us of all the authors who have written on this ſubject to the

the time of Ambroſe Paræus; time when to the progreſſes made by the midwives of the Hôtel Dieu at Paris in the art of midwifery, it was owing, that the ſurgeons, guided by their ſuperior lights, made ſome greater progreſs towards perfection.

THAT the reader however may not ſuſpect me of exaggeration, or over-ſtraining points, I requeſt of him to ſuſpend his judgment, to have the patience to hear me out to the end, and he will find, that I have here advanced nothing but what in the ſequel ſtands clearly and manifeſtly proved.

OBJECTION the Fourth.

IN a word, the manual operation of midwifery is an art, a ſcience, and as ſuch conſequently more competently to be profeſſed by men, than by women. It is making the art cheap, ſay the moderns, to allow the practice of it to women.

ANSWER.

ANSWER.

I AGREE with you in the first part of your objection: but I absolutely deny the consequences.

THERE are women, who, besides the gifts received from nature, are improved by study, by reading, and experience, who succeed much more easily than men in the practice. To say the truth, nature has, in this point, been even lavish to the women, for this art is a gift innate to them.

I WILL however own, that not all women indistinctly are proper for this business; that there must be natural dispositions cultivated by art; that a purely speculative knowledge is not sufficient; that there are required good intellects, memory, strength of body and mind, sentiments, some taste, and practice joined to theory; so that when I say that the women are born with dispositions for this art; this can only be understood in general, and relatively to the men, among whom those dispo-

diſpoſitions are more rare, becauſe they are leſs natural to them in this branch.

WOULD it not be a ſort of blaſphemy againſt the divine providence to maintain, that what God has placed and left in poſſeſſion of the women, was fitter for the men? the attentive, beneficent, and tender manner with which he governed his people elect, obliges us to believe that he omited nothing of what was neceſſary or advantageous to it; ſince he regarded that people as his own particular dominion and appendage; honoring it with his preſence, like a maſter in his dwelling-houſe, or a father in his family. He had taken pleaſure in the forming and inſtructing it from it's infancy. He put the women in poſſeſſion of the art of midwifery, he bleſſed, approved, and recompenced the midwives. It is but juſt, that men ſhould hear and keep ſilence where God ſpeaks. They may think themſelves happy, to learn from him the true ſecrets of nature, and not from thoſe pretended doctors who abandon the rules of truth to cleave to themſelves; who, inſtead of her, preſent us with a phan-

phantom of their own creation, who, in ſhort, would make us the worſhippers of their dreams and imaginations.

THE women have for them the authority of God, who has declared himſelf in their favor; they have for them the authority of men from one pole to the other, who have in all ages made uſe of the female miniſtry in this art. Such a plurality of votes has ſurely ſome claim to prevalence, eſpecially, ſince it is founded upon the natural order of things, upon truth and reaſon ſupported by experience. This experience we have on our ſide: none can deny it, without denying ſelf-evidence.

ONE would think there is a kind of curſe attends the operations of men-practitioners, as I dare aver it for a truth, that difficult and fatal labors have never been ſo rife, or ſo frequent, as ſince the intermeddling of the men. Whereas, God has ever ſo bleſſed the work of the midwives, that never were lyings-in ſo happily conducted, nor ſo ſucceſsful, as when the practice was entirely in their hands.

OPEN the book of Numbers, you will obſerve, that God having ordered Moſes to number his people: out of ſeventy individuals of the family of Jacob, who had come to dwell in Egypt, two hundred and forty years before, there had iſſued above ſix hundred thouſand men fit to carry arms, without taking into the account an almoſt infinite multitude of children, of youths under twenty years of age, of women, of old men, beſides a whole tribe, that of Levi, which was entirely ſet apart for the divine worſhip.

OBJECTION the Fifth.

THERE is no ſuch thing as being a good practitioner of midwifery without underſtanding anatomy: now this ſcience is the province of a man, of a phyſician, or ſurgeon, not of a woman.

ANSWER.

IT is ſufficient that a woman underſtands and knows the ſtructure and mechanical diſpoſition of the internal parts which

more

more particularly diſtinguiſh her ſex; that ſhe can diſcern the container from the contents, what belongs to the mother from what belongs to the child, as well as what is foreign to both. In ſhort, ſhe ought to be ſkilled enough to give full ſatisfaction to all queſtions that the moſt able anatomiſt could put to her, in reſpect to that part purely neceſſary to the art of midwifery, and to its operations with maſtery and ſafety.

Now the midwife, eſpecially one inſtructed in hoſpitals, ought to be well acquainted with all that is eſſential and neceſſary to that effect; and ſhe cannot but be ſo, unleſs ſhe is of herſelf incapable, or that thoſe who are charged with the inſtruction of pupils, wrong the confidence of the public.

I MYSELF know more than one midwife, ſo well educated as to be able to give demonſtrations on this ſubject, to analize things by their names, either upon drawings of them, upon ſkeletons, or upon the originals themſelves. It is true, that theſe poor midwives do not under-

ſtand anatomy enough to make diſſections; but I fancy that the ladies who want aſſiſtence in their lyings-in, are not very curious of having one that can diſſect inſtead of delivering them.

PROPHANE hiſtory has preſerved to us the names and talents of a number of illuſtrious women who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in all kinds of arts. Cleopatra queen of Egypt, is one of the firſt ladies that have written on the art of midwifery. Mr. Smellie, in his introduction, endeavours to render doubtful this quality of queen and princeſs, with a deſign, probably to weaken the credit of it, or rather out of contempt to the women; but as all thoſe who have made collections of antient hiſtory, aſſure us, that notwithſtanding the wars in which this princeſs was engaged, ſhe did not neglect an aſſiduous application to phyſic, I had rather adhere to their authority, than to that of Mr. Smellie.

IN Greece, Aſpaſia, and a number of other celebrated women, quoted by various

ous authors, have applied themſelves to our profeſſion, and have left behind them valuable works on the method of delivering women, and of managing them both before and after their lying-in.

MADAM Juſtin, midwife to the Electreſs of Brandenbourg, has alſo given us a very good treatiſe. Several profeſſed midwives appointed to form the apprentices of the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, have written very clearly on the ſame ſubject, without however being miſtreſſes of any more anatomy, than what was ſufficient for their buſineſs.

OBJECTION the Sixth.

THE different inſtruments which the men have invented in aid of, and ſupplement to the deficiency of nature, and of which they are frequently obliged to make uſe in different labors, ought not to be put into the hands of midwives: and were it but for this reaſon alone, they ought to be excluded from the practice of this art. As, why multiply attendants unneceſſarily?

A man-midwife, with his inſtruments which he ought always to have about him, is enough for every thing: whereas a midwife, if the caſe requires inſtruments, will be obliged to have recourſe to a man: conſequently double embarraſſment, double expence.

ANSWER.

The keen inſtrumentarians bring an argument they imagine capable of baniſhing or exterminating all the midwives. The men, they ſay, enjoy alone the glorious privilege of uſing inſtruments, in order, as they pretend, to aſſiſt nature. But let them, I intreat of them, anſwer, whether if the queſtion could be decided by votes, where is the kingdom, where is the nation, where is the town, where, in ſhort, is the perſon that would prefer iron and ſteel to a hand of fleſh, tender, ſoft, duly ſupple, dextrous, and truſting to its own feelings for what it is about: a hand that has no need of recourſe to ſuch an extremity as the uſe of inſtruments, always blind, dangerous, and eſpecially for ever uſeleſs?

WHAT has engaged men to invent and bequeath to their ſucceſſors ſo many wonderful productions, for ſuch they imagine them? Is it not the thirſt of fame and money? Theſe gentry have judged, that they ought to ſpare no lucubrations, no labor of the head, no efforts of the tongue and pen to procure themſelves a ſtrange reputation, ſupported by theſe horrible inſtruments. But theſe lucubrations, this labor of the head, would have been much better employed in ſeeking for the means of abſolutely doing without them, as our good female practitioners have ever done, and as thoſe of them ſtill do, who are inſtructed in the right practice.

WE are no longer in the times of the Pharaohs and the Herods, who mercileſsly maſſacred the innocents; we are no longer in the times of thoſe pure Arabs, who were the inventors of a number of cruel operations, and of ſeveral inſtruments, which often cauſe more apprehenſion and terror to a woman in labor, though con-

cealed from her ſight, but never from her imagination, than the actual preſence of all the apparatus of the rack, where that torture is in uſe.

It were to be wiſhed, that all the men-midwives, who had wrote on this matter, had ſuppreſſed the mention of their inſtruments; for as their books often fall into the hands of women, ſo deeply intereſted as the ſex is in that ſubject, it is not to be imagined what bad effects they have. Their variations among themſelves would be ſufficient to frighten the women: you meet with authors condemning in the morning the over-night's ſentiment. I can obſerve them loſing their way in ſyſtematical errors, which explain nothing to me, and in which nothing can be diſcovered but diſagreement with one another, and with themſelves. The wiſeſt and moſt able of them, after having well examined all the kinds of inſtruments hitherto invented, have doubtleſs ſeen and been convinced of their ridiculouſneſs and uſefulneſs, but all of them have not hitherto dared to ſpeak out and ſay as much.

THE moſt intereſted of them would fain perſuade us, that, in their diſplay of a whole armory of inſtruments, they have diſcovered the philoſopher's ſtone of midwifery, in virtue of which they have a right to wreſt out of the womens hands, the practice of an art, which nature has appropriated to them. But certainly the point, and the whole point is, to find an expert dexterous hand, the ſex is out of the queſtion, provided it is but a human hand, and provided the work is done to the ſatisfaction of ſociety, it ſeems to me that nothing more need be required.

OBJECTION the Seventh.

IT is only for the ignorant to be ſo raſh as to raiſe an out-cry againſt the uſe of all inſtruments; people who do not know the abſolute neceſſity there is for employing them on certain occaſions. This clamor muſt proceed "from the intereſted views of "ſome low, obſcure and illiterate practi-"tioners, both male and female, who "think that they find their account in de-

" crying the practice of their neighbours." Such is the objection in the words of Dr. Smellie, in his Treatiſe on Midwifery (page 241.) and for this panegyric, he prepares us in his Introduction (page 55.) where, ſpeaking of the midwives of the Hôtel Dieu of Paris, he firſt indeed tells us, that the ſurgeons had, in that hoſpital, perfected themſelves in the art of midwifery; but then for fear that from thence occaſion might be taken of ſaying, that to women it was they were beholden for that perfection; he takes care immediately after to add, that what " got the better " of thoſe ridiculous prejudices which the " fair ſex had uſed to entertain," was, that the women or midwives of this hoſpital " had recourſe to the aſſiſtence of men " in all difficult caſes of midwifery."

ANSWER.

THESE gentlemen will permit me to tell them that they make great pretentions, and prove little or rather nothing. Calling hard names with a diſdainful tone, and with airs of triumph, are not overwhelming reaſons.

BUT

BUT to the point. Thoſe who reject inſtruments, ſay you, do not know what they are: they reject them from ignorance. This is ſoon ſaid. Nevertheleſs a number of authors, much more experienced and verſed in the matter than Dr. Smellie, are of this opinion. Deventer exclaims againſt inſtruments; Viardel does the ſame; Levret admits none but thoſe of his own invention, and rejects univerſally all others; and well might he except his own, ſince he wrote only to recommend them. Delamotte was not very fond of inſtruments: he tells us in his preface, that in a courſe of thirty years practice, he had not twice made uſe of the crotchet, though he had an extent of country forty leagues round, in which he regularly exerciſed his profeſſion, inſomuch as to have four lyings-in in a day under his management.

I HAVE very exactly read almoſt all the modern authors who have written on this art; and have been ſurprized to obſerve that whilſt, on one hand, they agree, they own, that in England, France, and Holland,

land, people are much come off, or undeceived, as to all thoſe dangerous or mortal inſtruments of which the antients made uſe, ſuch as the ſhort broad-bladed knife, (call it, if you pleaſe, a pen-knife) the biſtory, the crotchets, &c. eſpecially ſince the invention of the new forceps, or tire-tête: on the other hand, theſe ſame doctors tell you, that recourſe muſt be had to crotchets, or to the Cæſarean operation, when the new forceps will not do. A comfortable reſource this, in an inſtrument ſo boaſted as the beſt diſcovery that has been made ſince the creation of the world, and for which we are indebted to the moderns!

I HAVE alſo ſcrupulouſly examined all that authors have been pleaſed to ſay of great, wonderful and magnificent, with regard to the new forceps of Palfin, as it now ſtands after infinite corrections, as well in foreign countries, as in this one, which have dignified it with the name of the Engliſh forceps; and I find all theſe great elogiums reduced, at the moſt, to no more than the proving, as clear as the ſun, that it is allowable for an operator,

extremely

extremely able and extremely prudent, to make uſe of it, when the buſineſs might be perfectly well done without it.

FROM thence I deduce my demonſtration directly oppoſite to the pretentions of Dr. Smellie and of his followers. According to the inſtrumentarians, and according to certain doctors, there are certain occaſions, certain caſes, in which there is an abſolute neceſſity for employing the forceps. If we will hearken to and follow other doctors of more celebrity and credit, it is not right to make uſe of it, but when one may very well do without it: for example, after the having obviated all the obſtacles which retard the delivery, after having, with the hands only, diſ-engaged the head or the ſhoulders of the child, without which (ſay theſe ſame writers) the inſtrument would be found inſufficient or uſeleſs; this palpably implies the being able to do without it. Now ſince it is not allowable, in good practice, to make uſe of it, but when it is perfectly needleſs to uſe it at all, there is then no abſolute neceſſity for it; as ſurely, what can be done

done without, is not abſolutely neceſſary. Be this only tranſiently remarked. For I reſerve moſt convincingly to prove this propoſition in the ſecond part of this work. There I ſhall treat of all the inſtruments of our antients and our moderns, and beſides an enumeration of them ſhall demonſtrate their danger and uſeleſſneſs. In the mean time, it muſt be owned, that either Mr. Smellie has been much miſ-informed of what paſſes at the Hôtel Dieu of Paris, in the ward of the lying-in women, or elſe, which I the leaſt believe, is not ſincere in the account he gives us, that the women of that hoſpital "had recourſe to "the aſſiſtence of men, in all the difficult "caſes of midwifery;" which, he obſerves, "got the better of thoſe ridiculous preju-"dices the fair ſex had been uſed to enter-"tain." That is to ſay, in preference of midwives to men-practitioners.

I FREQUENTED this Hôtel Dieu two whole years, before being received an apprentice-midwife, which I accompliſhed with great difficulty, on account of being born a ſubject of England, and conſequently

quently a foreigner there: my admiſſion, however, I gained at length, through the favor, protection, and ſpecial recommendation of his royal highneſs the duke of Orleans. Now, I dare aver, that in all the time before, and after I was admitted there, I never but once ſaw Mr. Boudou, ſurgeon-major called, who did nothing more than to make us, one after another, *touch* the patient, about whom we had been embarraſſed; and as he interrogated, he made us diſcover an *uterus* full of ſchirrous calloſities, which joined to it's obliquities, impeded the palpation of it properly with the hand, the orifice being very difficult to come at. Every thing, however, was done without his help, and very ſucceſsfully. And moſt certainly we ſhould have ſpared him the trouble of coming at all into our ward, if the head-midwife, who was a little capricious in her temper, had not taken it into her head to keep us in our perplexity, which engaged us to ſend for Mr. Boudou without her knowledge, and for which ſhe was afterwards heartily angry with us.

I NEVER once ſaw an occaſion in which there was any neceſſity for uſing inſtruments, though in my time we had, at leaſt, five or ſix hundred women a month to deliver.

VERY far then are the midwives from having often occaſion of recourſe to the aſſiſtence of the men, in difficult caſes; and indeed to thoſe prejudiced in favor of men-practitioners, it may, though true, appear ſtrange, that in a place where there are every year ſo many thouſand women delivered, and conſequently many difficult labors amongſt them, and even caſes of monſters, there is no recourſe to the ſurgeon-major but in the laſt occurence, which falls out very rarely.

ABOUT eighteen or twenty years ago, Madam Poor, head-midwife of this hoſpital, delivered a woman of a monſter with two heads, with no help but only her fingers and a young prentice. Not an inſtrument was employed: no man aſſiſted her

her. The child was chriſtened, and died preſently after. The mother remained ſome months upon recovery, and did perfectly well. This fact requires no proofs, being of ſuch public notoriety. The monſter was carried to St. Coſmo's, where any ſurgeon may ſee it. I ſerved my time with this ſame miſtreſs ſome years after this kind of prodigy had happened.

As to what I have advanced concerning the procedure in the wards of the lying-in women, ſhould my teſtimony appear in the leaſt ſuſpicious, I appeal to the juſtice and veracity of all the doctors in England, who have been at the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, who cannot but confirm what I have ſaid. In the mean time Mr. De la Motte, who paſſes for an author of credit may certify, the ſame. Here follows what he ſays in his preface to his obſervations, page 2.

"One would think (ſays this author) "from reading the books of Meſſieurs "Mauriceau and Peu, that it was impoſ-

ſible

" ſible to ſucceed in the practice of mid-
" wifery, without having operated at Pa-
" ris in the lying-in ward of the Hôtel
" Dieu. It is true, that this hoſpital is the
" beſt ſchool in Europe, and that I would
" have ardently wiſhed to have been ad-
" mitted to the operations of midwifery
" during the five years I ſtaid in that hoſ-
" pital: but as there is no more than *one*
" ſurgeon *only*, who is in charge to attend
" when he is called to conſultation with
" the midwives, and that it is a place
" which goes only by favor, I was forced
" to content myſelf with following in qua-
" lity of topical ſurgeon, to the phyſicians
" who performed their viſits there. So
" that I followed only, for ſix months,
" three phyſicians in their rounds there,
" during which time I applied myſelf to
" examine the conduct obſerved by thoſe
" gentlemen, to preſerve the women after
" their lying-in from the accidents which
" follow thereon. By this means I made
" myſelf amends for my want of recom-
" mendation; but I can ſafely ſay, that du-
" ring the ſix months I was admitted in
" the above-mentioned quality, there was

" no

" no more than one extraordinary labor,
" which was that of a child engaged in the
" paſſage, where the preſence of a ſurgeon
" was required, and which however was
" terminated without any other help than
" that of patience. And yet there were
" (ſo far back as then) from three hun-
" dred and fifty, to four hundred preg-
" nant women, who were all delivered by
" the apprentices, and rarely by the Dame
" De la Marche, at that time, head mid-
" wife of the hoſpital: ſo that I am per-
" ſuaded, that thoſe who boaſt of having
" lain a great many women there, exag-
" gerate furiouſly."

For me, I dare yet go farther, and will maintain it, that thoſe perſons impoſe upon the public in ſuch boaſts: ſince the naturalized ſurgeons, thoſe of the nation, thoſe of Paris itſelf, have no right to come into our ward. There is no one admitted but the ſurgeon-major, whoſe place is a place of favor, and rather matter of form than any thing elſe. Much more then are ſtrangers excluded, and the truth is, that they never did, nor ever do operate there.

As to the reproach which Mr. Smellie makes to us of being intereſted, I can, for myſelf, prove that I have delivered gratuitouſly, and in pure charity, above nine hundred women. I doubt much, whether our critic can ſay as much, unleſs he reckons it for a charity, that which he exerciſed on his automaton or machine, which ſerved him for a model of inſtruction to his pupils. This was a wooden ſtatue, repreſenting a woman with child, whoſe belly was of leather, in which a bladder full, perhaps, of ſmall beer, repreſented the uterus. This bladder was ſtopped with a cork, to which was faſtened a ſtring of packthread to tap it, occaſionally, and demonſtrate in a palpable manner the flowing of the red-colored waters. In ſhort, in the middle of the bladder was a wax-doll, to which were given various poſitions.

By this admirably ingenious piece of machinery, were formed and ſtarted up an innumerable and formidable ſwarm of men-midwives, ſpread over the town and country.

country. By his own confeſſion, he has made in leſs than ten years nine hundred pupils, without taking into the account the number of midwives whom he has trained up, and formed in ſo miraculous a manner. See the preface of this author. He ſpeaks of his *machine* in the firſt page, and p. 5, of the number of his pupils.

Now as to theſe worthy pupils, muſt not they be finely enabled to judge of the ſituation of women with child, and of that of their fœtus? Muſt not they be deeply ſkilled in that branch of anatomy? Muſt not they acquire a habit of the touch exquiſitely nice, exquiſitely juſt, for diſcerning the proportion and analogy between a mere wooden machine, and a body, ſenſible, delicate, animated, and well organized?

I HOPE too that it is an injuſtice done to that doctor, by thoſe who ſay that his pupils have too often a way of hurrying out the waters, which can only ſerve to render the labor more dry, conſequently more laborious, and by that means furniſh

a handle for ſetting their inſtruments to work. If this ſhould be ſo, as once more I hope it is not, may not the bad habit they will have contracted during their pupilſhip, of drawing the ſmall-beer out of their wooden-woman, have contributed to this method of practice?

In the mean time, does it become a doctor to call us intereſted, who himſelf, for three guineas in nine leſſons, made you a man-midwife, or a female one, by means of this moſt curious machine, this mock-woman?

Objection the Eighth.

But you who come ſo late (it will be ſaid) What new diſcoveries do you bring us? Can you imagine you will, with one daſh of the pen, cancel the impreſſion of ſo many excellent works as have appeared before you? Do you believe a woman can have more ability than ſo many men of letters, who have labored all their life-time in perfecting the art, and who ſo ſtrongly recommend the uſe of inſtruments,

as

as the moſt expeditious method of extricating one ſelf, in all the caſes they ſpecify, and where there is a neceſſity for recourſe to extremities? Can you think, that theſe perſonages have all ſpent their time in vain?

ANSWER.

ALMOST all the ſciences and arts attain to perfection, in proceſs of time, through the experience and aſſiduous attention of thoſe who cultivate them. We owe the moſt of our rare and precious inventions to the ages of barbariſm, in which as yet reigned that brutality and ignorance which the irruption of the northern ſwarms had diffuſed over all Europe. This invention and perfection of arts cannot be attributed to merely human induſtry; but, with more probability, to a particular over-ruling providence, which commonly concealing itſelf under what ſeems to us the weakeſt, and under occurrences which appear to us the effect of chance, have guided men to wonderful diſcoveries. Do not we owe to a fair Circaſſian the art of inoculating children? And ſurely the art of midwifery,

perhaps more than any other, ſtands the faireſt chance of being improved by women.

For my part, I dare maintain it, that the ſurgeons, in form of men-midwives, have been the death of more children, with their *ſpeçulum matricis*, their *crotchets*, their *extractors* or *forceps*, their *tire-têtes*, &c. than they have preſerved. If in killing the children, they have ſaved the lives of ſome mothers, they have hurt and damaged, not to ſay murdered, a number of others. Their faults ought to ſet us upon ſearching out for a better way of going to work; a more eaſy, a more ſafe one. This fatal operation by inſtruments might even be pronounced abſolutely uſeleſs in the profeſſion. There is no inveighing ſeverely enough againſt ſo dangerous a doctrine as that which recommends them. Even common humanity requires an endeavour to open the eyes of thoſe, who imagine they cannot do better than blindly to aſſent, in every point, to authors recommendable, it is true, by a number of good things, but whoſe authenticity in thoſe points procures them but the more dangerouſly

rouſly credit in erroneous ones. Good ſenſe does not dictate our undiſtinguiſhingly receiving all that is advanced even by the beſt authors. As they may have been themſelves deceived, they may alſo deceive us. The ſacrifice of our reaſon is what we owe to nothing but to revelation. Books written by men have no title to it. As their underſtanding is not above the impoſitions of others, or errors of their own, they may adopt falſities, through ignorance, through prejudice, for want of examination, or of right reaſoning. Their heart may alſo have been byaſſed or corrupted by views of intereſt or of ambition. I may therefore, without over-preſumption aver, that with regard to inſtruments, it is wrong to lay any ſtreſs on the authority of others. For, with all the reſpect due to ſome illuſtrious writers in theſe modern times, who defend the party oppoſed to ours, it may be aſſuredly ſaid, that either they have not known the art of midwifery, or that they have formed their judgment of it by nothing but the abuſes of the antients, who practiſed it without knowing it. Is it not a crying ſhame, that operators, who in their life-time maſſacred

ſuch numbers of human creatures, ſhould ſtill retain, after death, credit enough to aſſaſſinate common ſenſe? Faith is given to unſkilful authors, who have deceived their cotemporaries, poſterity, and perhaps themſelves: ignorance admires, enthuſiaſm protects them. But what a cruel and mean policy muſt be that of ſuppoſing, that the knowledge of truth ought not to have a clearer title to dominion than the illuſions of impoſture? I hope however, that, when the eyes of the public ſhall, in this point, come to be opened, and opened they will be, if true phyſicians will give themſelves the trouble to enlighten it, that public will at length ſee, that an approbation, unpreceded by a due examination, does it as little honor as ſervice.

LYING-IN women principally require an early aſſiſtence. For unleſs they are pregnant of a monſter with two heads (a caſe ſo rare, that in the practice of a thouſand ſurgeons, in their whole life, it may not twice, nor perhaps once fall in their way) there need never be an occaſion of recourſe to a ſurgeon: for in this caſe, of a monſter, it muſt be the affair of a moſt pro-

profoundly ſkilled operator, and not of merely a common man-midwife.

RUN over all the authors who have written on this matter, and you will find that the men-midwives, for want of right, and of true knowledge of the profeſſion, have introduced themſelves by force and violence, as one may ſay, ſword in hand, with thoſe murderous inſtruments: read the antients, it will appear, that they cut their way in, with iron and ſteel, fore-runners of murders. Our moderns to palliate theſe violences and injuſtices, agree on one hand, that the common and gentleſt methods are to be preferred: but, on the other hand, when you tell them, that the common and gentleſt methods are the hands of women, who ought therefore to be preferred to the men, and to be reſtored to their antient and rightful poſſeſſion; then you will ſee the whole pack open in full cry: to arms! to arms! is the word: and what are thoſe arms by which they maintain themſelves, but thoſe inſtruments, thoſe weapons of death! would not one imagine, that the art of midwifery was an art-military?

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As for we women, we can but in our weakneſs groan under this tyranny. Our proteſt, joined to that of reaſon and experience, avails little. Our wiſe innovators have a great deal more wit than we have; but it is not a wit of which we would be ambitious: for it ſerves them no better, than under the pretence of ſaving to be paid for deſtroying: at leaſt it is not unfrequently ſo.

Objection the Ninth.

Opinion often makes a ſtronger impreſſion on us than truth. Whatever you may ſay to the contrary, the imagination will prevail of life, being ſafer in the hands of a man than of a woman. For, in ſhort, of what importance can a woman be, who, after all, is but a woman? This is ſo true, that moſt of our women now a-days will have a man-midwife, ſome through prejudice, others through good œconomy, becauſe if there are any preſcriptions neceſſary for the patient, the man-midwife, who is alſo ſtiled the doctor, will write for them; whereas, if there is a midwife, a phyſi-

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cian may moreover be requiſite: this is an additional charge.

ANSWER.

A HAPPINESS founded on opinion only, is rather too ſlightly founded, eſpecially in a point where not leſs than life is at ſtake. I know there are women ſo obſtinately wedded to their opinion of certain pretended doctors, that they would not look upon it to be a good office done them, though certainly it would be one, to undeceive them. I alſo know that the title of doctor is ſo common in this country, that it ought to be very cheap.

MOST of the women in labor, (you ſay) will have men to aſſiſt them, as thinking their life more in ſafety with them, than in the hands of women. May be ſo. But what does that prove but the deplorable blindneſs, the weakneſs of the human underſtanding, and the ſilly prejudices in favor of novelty? Is it then the inſtruments of theſe men-midwives that give this confidence or this ſecurity? As if a king, a queen, or princeſs dangerouſly ill, could be defended

defended from death, by doubling their guards.

THE women have on this occaſion the delicacy not to ſuffer even their huſband to aſſiſt at their labor, and this out of decency. This is very well for thoſe who are contented with midwives; but as for thoſe who will be attended by men to lay them, it is very wrong in them not even to inſiſt on their huſband to ſtay by them. For this preference of men to deliver them, comes either from a greater inclination to the men, or from a greater confidence in them than in the women, or, in ſhort, from the pure neceſſity they imagine themſelves under to employ a man. If it is from inclination, or from neceſſity, it will be always proper for the huſband to ſtay, to contain the man-midwife, as much as poſſible, within the bounds of modeſty. If the man-practitioner is preferred by them, out of the great confidence they have in men: in what man can they place more confidence than in a tender huſband: who more than he can intereſt himſelf in the man-midwife's acquitting himſelf duly of his office?

I WONDER that this great confidence which is repoſed in the male ſex ſhould be limited to the man-midwife only. I promiſe the women, that they may with equal juſtice imagine a greater handineſs about them in men-attendants than in women; they may juſt as well have men-nurſes as men-midwives: the convenience will be as much greater in the one, as the ſafety will be in the other. Away then with all the women, who croud round to comfort and relieve a woman in labor: away with your mothers, ſiſters, aunts or female acquaintance: in conſequence to the preference due to the male-ſex, let the patient's labor be attended by fathers, brothers, uncles, or men-acquaintance.

BUT let common opinion lower women as much as it will, ſo much is certainly and experimentally true, that, notwithſtanding the prejudice and ſuperiority of the men, the judgments and deciſions of the women are often more ſhrewd, more exact than theirs. Women have a certain delicacy of mind, which, not being ſpoilt by

by undigeſted ſtudies, renders their taſte much more quick, and more to be depended on, than that of the half-learned.

THE diſtribution of merit and talents is entirely in the hands of divine providence, that gives what and to whom it pleaſes, without reſpect to the quality of perſons; forming out of the aſſemblage of ſciences of all ſorts, a ſort of empire, which, generally ſpeaking, embraces all ages, and all countries, without diſtinction of age, ſex, condition or climate. The rightful claim to ſolid praiſe in this empire, is for every one to be contented with his place, without bearing envy to the glory of others. Theſe he ought to look on as his colleagues, deſtined as well as himſelf to enrich ſociety, and become its benefactors. As this providence places kings on the throne for nothing but the good of the people, neither does it diſtribute different talents to men but for the public utility. But, as in ſtates it has been ſeen, that tirants and uſurpers have ſometimes got the upper-hand, ſo, amongſt men of talents there may, if I dare ſo expreſs myſelf,

myſelf, creep in a ſort of tiranny, which, in the preſent caſe for example, conſiſts in looking on the women with a jealous eye, eſpecially thoſe who from an eminence of talents might diſpute precedence with them. Thence it is that they are, as it were, hurt by their ſucceſſes, and by their reputation, and that they endeavour to depreciate their merit, in order to eſtabliſh the ſole dominion in themſelves. A hateful defect this, and entirely contrary to the good of ſociety.

This is nevertheleſs the defect of moſt of our young men-midwives. But when I conſider the mercenary intereſt by which they are guided, I am far from wondering at their inveteracy againſt thoſe midwives, eſpecially who are diſtinguiſhed for their merit and ſcience. The objects of this malignity of theirs are principally thoſe, who have a reputation they fear may enable them to be their competitors in practice. From this mean jealouſy of profeſſion, they warmly inveigh againſt its being truſted in our ſex. This is a doctrine they ſpread every where, and the ſtale burthen of their abuſe is ever, "What is a woman?

woman? What effectual ſervice can be expected from a woman?" And thus, by dint of this repetition and of clamor, they come at length to accompliſh the perſuading an over-credulous public. The common people have in all ages been eaſily ſeducible, open to impoſition, and when once an error has got full poſſeſſion of them, it is a miracle if it does not maintain itſelf in it. They love novelty, are readily taken with ſtriking objects, and ſtop at the ſurface of things, which they eagerly ſeize. Singularity eſpecially moves them. Reaſon alone, and diveſted of chimeras, appears too naked to them. They muſt have ſomething that borders upon the marvellous. Is it not from thence that the dreams of the poets found faith among the Heathens, or that the fables of the Coran paſs for ſo many truths among the Mahometans? To the ſame weakneſs in favor of every thing that will make one ſtare, is owing that ſilly credulity, which ſo often leads men to the ſwallowing the groſſeſt abſurdities. One would think fictions had peculiar charms for them.

NOTHING however can be more pitiful, than the injuſtice of running down a ſex, which has, in this very matter of midwifery, ſerved the whole earth through all ages, till juſt the preſent one, that a ſmall part of the world, becomes in imagination, all of a ſudden a land of Goſhen, or the only enlightened ſpot, and takes the ignis fatuus of a mercenary preſumption for the ſun-ſhine of ſound reaſon. But after this injuſtice, where will the men ſtop? What profeſſion will they leave to the women? It will at laſt be diſcovered, that the men can ſpin, raiſe paſte, cut out caps, pickle and preſerve better than we do. After all, is it not even ridiculous to ſee a cuſtom, eſtabliſhed for above five thouſand years, univerſally approved by great and little, fall into diſgrace, I will not ſay by the opinion, but by the whim of a handful of people, moſt of whom too are, moſt probably, perfectly ſenſible of the nonſenſe and abſurdity of that whim, but defend it from a ſpirit that can hardly not be ſuſpected of intereſtedneſs, which indeed will make men defend any thing?

And after all, even common decency and common gratitude might engage the men-midwives to ſpeak leſs ſlightingly of the women of that profeſſion; ſince of whom is it, that the moſt famous of our preſent maſter-men-midwives of London have learned their ſcience but of the women? Do not even the principal ones of them make it their boaſt to have ſerved a kind of apprenticeſhip under thoſe midwives, who had ſerved theirs in the Hôtel Dieu at Paris?

But ſurely the reader will not think it here impertinent to obſerve, that the wiſe adminiſtrators of that famous hoſpital, would hardly have failed eſtabliſhing men-midwives in it, if the ſafety of the ſubject had had any thing to fear in the hands of women. But women alone it is that preſide at all the lyings-in there, be they never ſo extraordinary or laborious. The men-midwives have never yet been able to extend their footing within that place. Their emiſſaries can gain no admiſſion, nor are any proficients trained up there but

women

women only. Notwithſtanding which, all the women who are there delivered are ſatisfactorily and ſkilfully aſſiſted. Vexatious accidents are leſs frequent there, in proportion to the numbers, than elſewhere, under the eyes and operation of the men-midwives. Mother and child are both more in ſafety under the hands of thoſe dextrous matrons, than in thoſe of the moſt renowned men-practitioners *.

To thoſe then, who with a contemptuous tone aſk what is a woman but a woman? I ſhall with equal modeſty and truth anſwer, that generally ſpeaking women are inferior to men in moſt public ſervices. They are ſcarcely ſo fit to head armies, to navigate ſhips, break horſes, or the like manly employs: but there are certainly domeſtic branches, in which they

* The Commentator on Boerhave's Lectures, vol. V. p. 252. or §. 694. ſays, "*At Paris women are taken "into the Hôtel Dieu, fifteen days before their lying-in, at "the public expence, ſo that the buſineſs of midwifery can "be no where better learn'd.*"

rather make a better figure than the men. Midwifery ſeems their appropriate lot: and rather a gift than an acquiſition. They hold from nature herſelf, in this matter, a certain expertneſs and dexterity, to which not all the more abſtruſe refinement of art can ever conduct the men. Nor will the operation of iron and ſteel inſtruments ever equal the ſuppleneſs, ſafety and effectual miniſtry of the fingers of an expert midwife, who underſtands her buſineſs.

LET me then be permitted to aſk retortingly in my turn, What is, at the beſt, a man-midwife? Is not he one of a new ſet of operators unknown to our anceſtors? A creature in ſhort hard to be defined? In no original or primitive language is there ſo much as a word to expreſs one of this profeſſion. The common word for him in the Engliſh language is a contradiction in terms, a monſtrous incongruity; a MAN-*mid*-WIFE. Senſible of the ridiculous ſound of this expreſſion, ſcarcely leſs ſo than that of a *woman*-coach-*man*, they have, by way of remedy, borrowed the term of *accoucheur* from that nation whence the faſhion was

was unhappily borrowed, among many other fashions, so many of which are however rather ridiculous, than like this one *big* with danger, added to the ridicule of it. But even that affected French word *accoucheur* is of a very recent date in France. No French authors employ it, who are not themselves of a more modern date than the word itself, which has not above the antiquity of a century to boast. The name and vocation of a midwife are found in the most primitive languages, being, in fact, coeval with mankind itself.

As to those who, from a principle of oeconomy, prefer a man-midwife to a midwife for conducting a lying-in, with respect to the remedies and prescriptions which may be necessary on those occasions, Oeconomy is doubtless a laudable consideration, but I am much afraid, that those who on this occasion make it a reason of preference, much mis-calculate things. This man-midwife you prefer is either an eminent or an ordinary one. If he is an eminent one, you are not always sure of

having him in the greateſt need; for beſides their being ſo rare, they cannot be every where at one time. But admitting that you are fortunate enough to fall into the hands of a man-midwife of the greateſt name in the profeſſion, can you imagine that you will have a very cheap bargain of him? Theſe gentlemen expect no ſmall fees, and will not attend without them. You would beſides be aſhamed of not doing honor to the footing on which they give themſelves out. Whereas the ſame gratitude is not always ſhewn to a midwife, however ſkilful in her profeſſion, and whatever trouble ſhe may give herſelf both before and after the lying-in of her patients; notwithſtanding too the aſſiduous attendance and viſits ſhe beſtows upon them till they are out of danger; notwithſtanding theſe tender attentions ſhe has for the children, which are ſo ſeldom regarded by the men-midwives; there are who imagine they cannot give a midwife of this ſort too little, and that for no other reaſon on earth, but becauſe ſhe is not a man.

If on the contrary, and what the moſt frequently happens, you fall into the hands of one of the common men-midwives, either of that multitude of diſciples of Dr. Smellie, trained up at the feet of his artificial doll, or in ſhort of thoſe ſelf-conſtituted men-midwives made out of broken barbers, tailors, or even pork-butchers (I know myſelf one of this laſt trade, who, after paſſing half his life in ſtuffing ſauſages, is turned an intrepid phyſician and man-midwife) muſt not, I ſay, practitioners of this ſtamp be admirably fitted, as well for the manual operation, as for the preſcriptions? If then it is from thrift they are employed, by way of ſparing fees to a real phyſician, I own, I think this is puſhing ſavingneſs too far; as I ſhould be almoſt as much afraid of the preſcriptions of theſe mock-doctors as of their operation. I ſhould have more confidence in the advice of a diſcreet matron, or of a ſkilful midwife, who, by habit and a long experience of ſeeing ladies in their lyings-in attended by the beſt phyſicians, is in the moſt common caſes of the labor-pains,

more able to adviſe the ſick perſon to innocent remedies, where there is no complication in the diſorder, than thoſe half-bred or ignorant pretenders: but if there is a complication, then there muſt abſolutely be a good phyſician called in, the expence of which ſhould not be regretted, ſince life is at ſtake.

Now in ſuch caſes, a midwife, though never ſo ſkilful, will neither be aſhamed nor backward to require ſuch aid: whereas a man-midwife, the more ignorant he is, will be but the more careful of concealing that ignorance, and from the moſt falſe prejudice that both the faculties of phyſic and ſurgery are implicit ingraftments on the profeſſion of midwifery in a man, will rather let mother and child periſh, than call in that aſſiſtance, of which he will be aſhamed to confeſs his ſtanding in any need. He will then raſhly do the beſt he can for his patient: but what will that beſt moſt probably be? Torture and death; and that with perfect impunity. I ſay moſt probably, for not even the moſt credulous, or the moſt zealous for the appropri-

propriation of this profeſſion to the male-ſex, can hardly carry the blindneſs of credulity and obſtinacy the length of aſſenting in earneſt, that in the common run of men-practitioners you are to find at once the man-midwife, the phyſician, and the ſurgeon. Whereas women, fully ſufficient for all caſes but the very extraordinary ones indeed, are ever ready to call for proper help, on the firſt alarm of danger, of which too their apprehenſion is much more quick and juſt than that of the men.

Objection the Tenth.

The ignorance of the women is the cauſe of the little confidence there is repoſed in them.

ANSWER.

If this objection was fairly ſtated, it ſhould be ſaid, that the ignorance of the women in the art of deſtroying mother and child, occaſions their not being truſted ſo much as they deſerve with the office of ſaving both. In that art indeed of perpetrating double murder with perfect impunity,

punity, under the ſanction of the public credulity, impoſed upon by a vain parade of learning, I readily confeſs the men ſuperior to the women. I do more than confeſs it, I will prove it; and how? even from their own writings and confeſſion, not extorted from them by the ſpirit of candor, but from an intereſted deſire of decrying or ſupplanting one another, in order to ſelf-recommendation.

In fact, whoever will, with a competent degree of knowledge of the ſubject, and of due impartiality, peruſe the practical treatiſes of midwifery, written by the moſt celebrated practitioners, ſome of whom have ſo vainly pretended to the triple union of the characters of man-midwife, ſurgeon and phyſician in one perſon, and it will be found, that all their boaſted ſuperiority of erudition, has only led them into the greater errors of practice, and the moſt barbarous violences to nature.

But perhaps I exaggerate. Let the reader judge for himſelf, and pronounce

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as his own reaſon ſhall dictate to him. Let him if he can read without ſhuddering, the following quotation from one of the moſt celebrated *men*-midwives of the age, Levret, p. 199. "Mauriceau had "invented a new *tire tête*, which was to "be introduced into that part (the uterus). "Peu or Pugh, like *many* others, made "uſe of different hooks (*crochets*) and La "Motte opening the head with ſciſſors, "ſcooped out the brain, &c. We read, "with horror, in *all* theſe authors, that "they have extracted children, who, tho' "much *maimed* or *mutilated*, have yet *lived* "ſeveral hours."

Upon this many reflections will naturally occur. Theſe children thus deſtroyed, owed moſt probably their death neither to nature, nor to the difficulties of the paſſage through which the launch is made into our world, but to the labor being prematurely forced, and the delivery effectuated by thoſe torturous inſtruments, which at once kill the child, and not ſeldom irreparably wound the mother in the tender contexture of theſe parts. A midwife, with leſs learning and more patience than

than thoſe gentlemen, and well acquainted with the power and cuſtom of Nature to operate in ſome ſubjects, ſometimes more ſlowly, and in all ever more ſafely and gently than art, would have left to nature, not without her tendereſt aſſiſtance of that nature, the expulſion of the child. A proper prediſpoſal of the paſſage, and direction of the poſture, with an unremitting attention to employ the fingers, ſo as not to lapſe the critical moment of operation, often never to be recovered with ſafety to mother and child, would have, I repeat it, and appeal to common ſenſe for the probability thereof, ſaved the lives of thoſe innocents, which thus fell the victims of thoſe *learned* experiments, with inſtruments, which, by the way, be it remarked, none are ſo forward to uſe, as thoſe who are the loudeſt in exclaiming againſt the employ of them. And reaſon good, if they exclaim againſt them, it is evidently in order to cover their practice with them, againſt which the minds of their patients muſt ſo naturally be revolted. But that exclaiming does not evidently hinder their being uſed, when, the truth is, that if due care was previouſly taken with the

the patients, thoſe execrable ſubſtitutes to the fingers need never be uſed at all.

But if theſe inſtrumentarians were called to account for their ſo juſtly preſumable maſſacres, what would be their defence? Moſt certainly not the truth. One would not own, that in order to attend a richer patient, or perhaps to return to his bottle, he had recourſe to his fatal inſtruments, to make the quicker riddance or *effectual* diſpatch; another would not confeſs, that he employed them purely becauſe his fund of *patience* was exhauſted; ſome would not care to allow, that they uſed them purely on the ſcheme of trying experiments; and none of them would, you may be ſure, plead guilty of ignorance of better and more ſalutary methods. No! their wilful error, or that want of ſkill, they would be ſure to conceal under the cloud of hard words and ſcientific jargon, in which they would dreſs up their reſpective caſes, and inſult the ignorance of thoſe ſilly good women, who *know* no *better* than to deliver thoſe of their own ſex with the help of their fingers and hands, and who are ſo undextrous, as to have no notion

notion of putting them to such unnecessary tortures and risks, as are inseparable from the use of those iron and steel instruments. Instruments which rarely fail of destroying the child, or at least cruelly wounding it, and never but injure the mother, not only in those exquisitely tender-textured parts, where they are so blindly and ungovernably introduced; but in the often irrecoverable dilatations of the external orifice, the vagina, and especially the *fourchette* or *frænum labiorum*, all which, in general, they considerably damage: and always originally without necessity. For if through carelessness, if through an impatience, so much more natural to men than to women, in a case and position of this nature; if through ignorance of the critical minute of extraction, the occasion of operating with the fingers has *not* been *lapsed*, any recourse to instruments is perfectly unnecessary, and they will hardly ever succeed where the subject is inaccessible to the fingers, without having the worst of consequences to dread from them both to mother and child. Nothing then can be worse for a man-midwife, than to be tempted to any negligence, to any precipitation,

pitation, to any oſtentation, in ſhort, of expedition or of ſuperiority of ſkill to that of the women, by his having thoſe inſtruments at hands, the doing without which is at once ſo much better and ſafer, even by the confeſſion of thoſe who uſe them nevertheleſs.

How greatly then is the ignorance of the midwives preferable to *ſuch* an uſe, as the male-practitioners commonly make of that deep learning of theirs, which only miſleads them, at the expence of humanity! How over-compenſated is that want of theoretical knowledge, ſo unjuſtly reproached to women, ſince they poſſeſs a ſufficiency even of that knowledge; how over-compenſated, I ſay, is that ſuppoſed want, by that inſtinctive keenneſs of apprehenſion, and ready dexterity of theirs in the manual operation, which in them is a pure gift of nature, and to which not the utmoſt efforts of art or experience can ever make the men arrive, for reaſons which will be made clearly appear in the two following conſiderations.

FIRST,

First, It will hardly be denied, that the art of midwifery requires a regular training or education for it. The ſeaſon of that education can only be that of youth. And ſurely in that ſeaſon preciſely, the very nature of the ſtudy excludes thoſe of the male-ſex, at the ſame time, that there is nothing in it indecent or improper for the females deſtined to that profeſſion. This propoſition will be more clearly illuſtrated, by an appeal to the reader's own ſenſe and reaſon upon what paſſes, and muſt neceſſarily paſs in thoſe hoſpitals for the reception of lying-in women, where thoſe of the male-ſex are allowed to attend for the ſake of learning the profeſſion.

This Charity is indeed founded upon ſpecious motives, but the conduct of it would make humanity ſhudder, even where no violence is expreſsly intended to humanity; and without the leaſt forced or uncharitable concluſion, may ſerve to demonſtrate the impropriety of attempting to throw the practical part of midwifery into the hands of male-practitioners, the

the implicit conſequence of which muſt be the excluſion of the midwives, without any direct and formal excluſion of them, but purely from the diſcouragement that will hinder any good and able ones being formed in future. And that no thorough-good men-midwives, except perhaps two or three extraordinary men in a whole nation, can ever be formed, the procedure at the lying-in hoſpitals, open to men-pupils, ſuch as it muſt of all neceſſity be from the nature of the thing itſelf, without any the leaſt reproach herein meant to the worthy managers, will convince all who will make an unprejudiced uſe of their judgment.

We will then ſuppoſe a lying-in hoſpital, in which, for the ſake of training up *men* to the profeſſion of mid*wives*, there are young pupils of the male-ſex admitted to attend and learn the practical and manual part of the buſineſs. To obtain this end, we will not ſay that women of virtue and character are ſubjected to the inſpection and palpation of a ſet of youths, who perhaps pay largely for their privilege of attendance; but we will grant,

that the objects of this charity are entirely women, who, though they may have unfortunately forfeited their right to virtue, cannot however have loſt their claim to the protection of that humanity, which, beſides the great and moſt political attention due to population, pays eſpecially a tender regard to the innocent burthen, though of a guilty mother. Yet among theſe wretched victims, there may be not a few who, if they were not even to deſerve more compaſſion than blame, for particular circumſtances of their ruin, in which the villainy of men has often a much greater ſhare than female frailty itſelf, cannot ſurely deſerve that all traces of modeſty, or natural remains of regard for it, ſhould be utterly eradicated by that hard neceſſity of theirs to accept of a charity, by which they muſt be abandoned up to the reſearches of a ſet of young men, to whoſe approaches their age and ſex muſt alone give an air of petulance and wantonneſs not to be explained away, to the ſatisfaction of the poor paſſive ſufferer, by the goodneſs of the intention. Every one muſt be ſenſible of the dreadful effects ſuch a treatment muſt have on the mind

of

of a poor creature in that condition, when the imagination is known to be the moſt weak, and ſuſceptible of the moſt dangerous impreſſions. At that critical time, amidſt all the terrors and apprehenſions inſeparable from her ſituation, ſhe is moreover expoſed to the greateſt indignity that can be well imagined, that of ſerving for a pillar of manage to break young men into the exerciſe of that moſt unmanly profeſſion. Nay, that very circumſtance of the uſe ſhe is put to, which ſhe is in fact to conſider as a kind of valuable conſideration by her paid for the relief afforded her, and which in that light can ſcarce be called a charity; that very circumſtance, I ſay, of her ſubmiſſion, at all calls, and upon all pretences of the pupils, being accounted for to her by the good intention of it, will yet hardly paſs on a wretched, frightened, harraſſed woman, who, whatever may be ſaid to procure her tame acquieſcence, can ſcarcely, if ſhe has a ſpark of female modeſty left in her, be reconciled to the groſſneſs of ſuch uſage, whether ſhe conſiders herſelf as the butt of wantonneſs, or the victim of experiments, or perhaps of both the one and the other.

It is well if ſhe is defended by her ignorance from any idea of thoſe dreadful inſtruments, of the having practices tried upon her with which, her circumſtances might but too reaſonably render her apprehenſive, ſince a needleſs reſort to them may be too often preſumed in the courſe of practice, where the men are even paid for their aſſiſtence. Theſe the men-midwives may poſſibly indeed conceal from the ſight of their patients, but I defy him to conceal them from their wounded imagination, if they are not wholly ignorant or can think at all.

YET in pure juſtice to all parties it ſhould be obſerved, that, beſides many other points to be learned only by ocular inſpection and manual palpation, of which no theory by book or precepts can convey ſatisfactory or adequate notions, that great and eſſential point in our profeſſion, a ſkill in what we call the *Touching*, is not to be acquired without a frequent habit of recourſe to the ſexual parts whence the indications are taken. And in this nothing but perſonal experience can perfect the practitioner. But this admitted, only proves

proves the more clearly the utter impropriety of men addicting themſelves to this occupation. For, once more, moſt certainly the ſeaſon of acquiring the nicety of that faculty of *Touching*, beſides other requiſites in the art, is for obvious reaſons that of youth. Now let any one figure to himſelf boys or young men, running at every hour, and exerciſing a kind of cruel aſſault on thoſe bodies of the unfortunate females, upon which they are to learn their practice. But will they learn it by this means? It is much to be doubted. It may perhaps be granted, that men of a certain age, men paſt the ſlippery ſeaſon of youth, may claim the benefit of exemption from impreſſions of ſenſuality, by objects to which cuſtom has familiarized them. But, in good faith, can this be hoped or expected in the ungovernable fervor of youth? Can ſuch a ſtoic inſenſibility be imagined in a boy or young man, as that he can direct ſuch his reſearches by pawing and grabbling to the end of inſtruction only? Muſt not thoſe reſearches, humanly ſpeaking, be made in ſuch a diſorder of the ſenſes, as to exclude the cool ſpirit of learning and improvement? May

he not loſe himſelf, and yet not find what was the occaſion of loſing himſelf? In ſhort, granted, though it is ſurely hard to grant, that the wretched women, admitted to this ſo falſely called Charity, may not deſerve much tender conſideration; but in what can the poor young pupils have deſerved ſo ill of their parents or guardians, as to be thus expoſed to temptations ſo ſhockingly indecent? What father, what mother, what conſiderate relation can paint to himſelf a child, or charge of his, at an age ſo incapable of reſiſting the power of ſenſual objects, as is that of youth, employed in exploring ſuch arcanums, and exploring them too in vain? It is ſurely eaſier to gueſs the natural conſequences, than to defend either the ſubjecting youths to them, or the hoping any good from the ſubjecting them. In ſhort, even Dr. Smellie's doll is a more laudable method of inſtruction.

But beſides this reaſon taken from the moral impoſſibility of laying a timely foundation of practical knowledge in the male-ſex, for preferring women under the falſe charge

charge of ignorance, to the ſo unconſequentially boaſted learning of the men, there remains a yet ſtronger argument againſt the male-practitioners: an argument furniſhed by nature herſelf, and of the which, every impartial reader's own feelings will in courſe render himſelf the judge.

NATURE has to all animals, from the man down to the loweſt inſect, to all vegetables, from the cedar to the hyſſop, to all created beings, in ſhort gives what is reſpectively neceſſary for them. Nor can it without the groſſeſt abſurdity be imagined, that this tender univerſal parent, or call her by a yet more ſacred name, the divine providence, would have failed women in a point of ſo great importance to them, as that of the ability to aſſiſt one another, in lying-in, at the ſame time, that ſhe has given them ſo ſtrong and ſo reaſonable a ſympathy for thoſe of their ſex in that condition? Can it be thought that nature, ſo vigilant, ſo attentive, to the production of freſh generations, through all beings, ſhould have been deficient or indifferent as to women, her favourite work, the friend,

the ornament of human kind? And ſo ſhe muſt have been, if ſhe had left her in the neceſſity of recourſe to others than thoſe of her own ſex, in whom there exiſts ſo ſenſibly a ſuperior aptitude for tending, nurſing, comforting and relieving the ſick, that even the men themſelves, in their exigences of infirmities, can hardly do without them. But to ſay the truth, and as I have before remarked, nature has been even liberal in her accompliſhments of thoſe of the female ſex for this office. Not content with giving them a heart ſtrong imprinted with a particular ſimpathy for their own ſex, on this occaſion, a ſimpathy, which for its tenderneſs, has ſome reſemblance or affinity to the inſtinctive love or *ſtorge* that parents have for their children; ſhe has alſo beſtowed on them a particular talent, both for the manual function in the delivery of women, and for all the concomitant requiſites of their aid during the time of their lying-in: a talent in ſhort, which may even be felt, without the neceſſity of definition or proof, to be ſuperior to any poſſible attainment of the men in that art, though they ſhould have ſacrificed hecatombs of pregnant rabbits,

bits, or have brooded over thouſands of coveys of eggs in their ſearch of excellence in it .To ſay nothing of a certain ſoftneſs, flexibility, and dexterity of hand, palpably denied to the men, there is, both in the management of the manual operation, and in the attendance dne on thoſe occaſions, a quality in which the women, generally ſpeaking, excel the men, and that is, patience, a quality more eſſential, more indiſpenſable than can well be imagined. For on patience it is, that the ſalvation of both mother and child often depend; whether that patience is conſidered in the ſo needful point of prediſpoſing the paſſages, or of waiting, without however over-waiting, the critical efforts of nature in the expulſion of her burden. Now nothing is more certain, than that nature, who to woman has in general given all that vivacity and quickneſs of ſpirit, which ſeems incompatible with the phlegmatic quality of patience, has, as if ſhe had purpoſely meant an exception favourable to her darling end, the propagation of beings, eſpecially the human one, beſtowed on the female ſex, ſuch a remarkable aſſiduity and diligence in aid of womens labors, as are rarely

rarely to be ſeen in men, and when ſeen, appear rather forced than naturally conſtitutional to them. Women, in thoſe caſes, have more bowels for women: they feel for thoſe of their own ſex ſo much, that that feeling operates in them like an irreſiſtible inſtinct, both in favor of the pregnant mother and of the child. Thence it is, that a woman-practioner will employ, without ſtint, or remiſſion, all that is neceſſary to prediſpoſe the paſſages, for the leaſt pain, and the greater ſafety; ſhe will patiently, even to ſixteen, to eighteen hours, where an extraordinary caſe requires ſo extraordinary a length of time, keep her hands fixedly employed in reducing and preſerving the uterus in a due poſition, ſo as that ſhe may not lapſe the critical favorable moment of extraction, or of aſſiſting the expulſive effort of nature: and what man is there, can it be imagined, would have endurance enough to remain ſo long in a poſture, the very image of which, in one of his ſex, is ſo nauſeating and ſo revolting, to ſay nothing of the want of that pliability and dexterity of management of the fingers, on thoſe occaſions, ſo neceſſary, and ſo uncommon in the

the men, eſpecially in that very age, when their practice ſhould be ſuppoſed the greateſt.

It is then in thoſe caſes where nature is ſlow, as ſhe ſometimes is, in her operation, and often ſo, for the greater good of the patient, ſo conformed perhaps, that a quicker expulſion would only deſtroy her, that the midwife, not only uſes all patience conſiſtent with ſafety of life to the mother eſpecially, but inculcates patience to her ſuffering charge. Whereas *the men*, from their natural impatience, or from whatever other motives their precipitation may ariſe, having thoſe infernal iron and ſteel inſtruments at hand, are but too often tempted to make uſe of them, not only without neceſſity, but againſt all the indications of nature, pleading for a juſt indulgence to her of her own time in her own work. In vain then do too many of them declaim as loudly as can be wiſhed, or as the thing deſerves, againſt all recourſe to inſtruments, but in extremities which, they pretend, juſtify them. In the firſt place, thoſe extremities are often the fault of deficient

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and unskilful practice. The precious moments of the assistence due to nature have been lapsed, or there has been some failure of preliminary treatment; or what is worse yet, extremities are rashly taken for granted when they are not existing.

HERE, in the history of one single woman, I give the history probably of thousands.

A HEALTHY woman, about twenty five years of age, and remarkably robust, was in labor of her second child. Her first had come in that natural smooth way, as had given the same man-midwife, who was now to lay her again, not the least trouble, as often happens. In this second labor, however, the head of the child stuck in the passage; and was so far advanced, that the Doctor told her, whether in jest or earnest I cannot say, that he could discern the color of its hair. Her pain, though extremely great, had not however hindered her observing the Doctor rummaging for his instruments; her frightful apprehension, of which, she had all the rea-

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ſon to imagine, did not a little contribute to retard her throws. She taxed him with his intention to uſe them, and he did not deny it. Upon this ſhe uſed the moſt moving fervorous entreaties for a reſpite of execution; but all in vain; he told her, with a reſolute tone, that he knew ſurely better what was for her good than ſhe did, that he had even already waited longer than he could juſtify; and that her life was abſolutely deſperate if the child was not inſtantly extracted, of the which being dead, he was ſure from many inconteſtable ſymptoms. Her thorough confidence in a man, whom ſhe had often heard declaim vehemently againſt the uſe of inſtruments unleſs in extremities, and which ſhe underſtood in the moſt literal ſenſe, without conſidering, or perhaps knowing that, on too many occaſions, nothing is ſo different as words and actions; her thorough confidence in him, I ſay, joined to a natural love of life, and to her preſent feelings of exquiſite pain, determined her to an acquieſcence. The fatal inſtrument was ſtruck into the brain-pan of the child, who at the inſtant gave the lie to the firſt part of the Doctor's aſſeveration as to its death,

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by ſuch a ſtrong kick inwards as had almoſt killed her, and convinced her not only of its being alive but lively. This did not, you may be ſure, add to her belief of the ſecond part of his averment, that waiting any longer for the operation of nature, would infallibly have been her death. It might be ſo: yet ſurely there are ſtrong reaſons for concluding, that a little more patience might have ſaved a fine boy, and yet not have deſtroyed, or even hazarded the deſtroying the mother, whoſe life is certainly the preferable object. But how cruel to ſtate the dreadful alternative where it does not exiſt! And how eaſy, in the preſumption of that alternative, to extort the dreadful conſent from a weak woman, yet more weakened by her condition, and naturally determined by her preſent feelings, to embrace the appearance of an immediate relief, preſented to her in the form of ſalvation of life! However, ſcenes ſimilar or a-kin to this, may, without breach of charity, be preſumed too frequent, eſpecially under thoſe ſuper-ficial men-midwives, whom the facility of forming, in the manner they are generally formed,

ed, renders ſo ſuſpcious as to their ability, and who for ſo many reaſons, both of nature and intereſt, are but too liable to the murderous want of that patience, for which the women are but the more remarkable in this caſe, for their not being perhaps ſo capable of it in any other. But here their duty is even their nature; as if in ſo capital a point, ſhe would truſt it to nothing but herſelf.

If it ſhould be here to this objected that the women may, through that very ſpirit of patience, wait too long, or overſtay the time of ſaving the patients life, for want of calling in proper aſſiſtence; I have already implicitly obviated this objection, by remarking before, that a true thorough midwife, from her quickneſs of apprehenſion, and knowledge of the danger, will ever be readier to call in the aſſiſtence and advice of a phyſician, than the common men-midwives, who are ever in proportion to their ignorance the more raſh, the more fearleſs, and conſequently averſe to calling in that help, of which they will be aſhamed to confeſs their want, and thus

thus cruelly, though with impunity, loſe the opportunity of others endeavouring at leaſt to repair thoſe damages, of which themſelves are oftenеſt the authors. Now a midwife has no ſuch ſhame; ſhe pretends to no extraordinary ſkill in phyſic or ſurgery; ſhe knows her art, and will not preſume to tranſgreſs its bounds; ſhe would think herſelf accountable if ſhe did: and even that very tenderneſs and ſenſibility, upon which nature has founded her patience, will make her cautious how ſhe puſhes that patience too far. She may eaſily ſee, feel and diſcern thoſe caſes in which nature calls the phyſician in aid to the midwife; nature, who ſeems to have placed ſuch boundaries between thoſe profeſſions, as nothing but intereſt, preſumption, or ignorance of nature, could ever render their union in one perſon ſuppoſable: tho' the quality of phyſician may not indeed exclude that of the ſurgeon, but rather implies, at leaſt, the theory of ſurgery. For I preſume anatomy is the great baſis of true rational phyſic, though it can very little aſſiſt practical midwifery, which depends ſo much upon purely manual operation,

ration, and needs only a ſufficient general idea of the ſtructure of the ſexual parts in woman, the conceptacle, and paſſages of the delivery.

THIS is ſo true, that any impartial obſerver of the male and female practitioners in midwifery, will eaſily diſtinguiſh the characteriſtic difference of the ſexes, in their reſpective manner of operation.

IN the men, with all their boaſted erudition, you cannot but diſcern a certain clumſy untowardly ſtiffneſs, an unaffectionate perfunctory air, an ungainly management, that plainly prove it to be an acquiſition of art, or rather the rickety production of intereſt begot upon art.

IN women, with all their ſuppoſed ignorance, you may obſerve a certain ſhrewd vivacity, a grace of eaſe, a handineſs of performance, and eſpecially a kind of unction of the heart, that all evidently demonſtrate this talent in them to be a genuine gift of nature, which more than compenſates what ſhe is ſuppoſed to have

refuſed them, in depth of ſtudy, though even of that they are not ſo unſuſceptible, as ſome men detractingly think; and in midwifery, moſt certainly they attain all that they need of learning to perfect them, with a facility the greater for nature, having collaterally endowed them with an organization of head, heart and hand, obviouſly adapting them to this her moſt capital myſtery. This will be denied by none who have any regard for truth, and who do them juſtice, as to the keenneſs of their apprehenſion, as to that ſympathizing ſenſibility which ſupplies them with the needful fund of patience, and tender attention; and as to that peculiar ſuppleneſs of the fingers, as well as ſlight of hand, in a function which rather exacts a kind of knack or dexterity, than mere ſtrength, of which they have alſo a competency. Nor can it be quite without weight, that the midwives, beſides their perſonal experience, being ſometimes themſelves the mothers of children, have a kind of intuitive guide within themſelves, the original organ of conception, itſelf pregnant, in more caſes than that, with a ſtrong inſtinctive influence on the mind and actions

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of the ſex; an influence not the leſs certainly exiſting, for its being undefinable and unaccountable, even to the greateſt anatomiſts *.

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* *It is evidently this univerſal influence of the* Uterus *over the whole animal ſyſtem, in the female ſex, that Plato has in view in that his deſcription of it, which Mr. Smellie (introd.* p. 15) *calls* odd *and* romantic, *from his not making due allowance for the figurative ſtile of that florid author. Thus the diffuſion of the energy of the* uterus, *Plato calls its* "wandering up and down thro' the body." *A power of activity which, towards conquering the otherwiſe natural coldneſs of the female conſtitution, nature would hardly give to the* uterus *merely to excite in women a deſire, ſanctified under due reſtrictions, by her favorite end, that of propagation, if ſhe had not, at the ſame time, endowed that uterus with an inſtinct, beneficial by its influence in the preſervation of the iſſue of that* deſire. *And the real truth is, that there is ſomething that would be prodigious, if any thing natural could be properly termed prodigious, in that ſupremely tender ſenſibility with which women in general are ſo ſtrongly impreſſed towards one another in the caſe of lying-in. What are not their bowels on that occaſion? It may not be here quite foreign to remark, in ſupport of the characteriſtic importance of the* uterus *or the* womb, *that in the antient Saxon language the word* Man *or* Mon *equally ſignified one of the male or female ſex, as* Homo *in Latin. But for diſtinction-ſake the male was called* Weapon-man, *(not however for any offenſive weapon or* inſtrument *in midwifery;) and the female* Womb-man, *or man with an* uterus: *from whence by contraction the word* woman.

The men, it will be ſaid, have many or all of theſe qualifications, except indeed the laſt. Granted that they have: but how very few are there of the men that poſſeſs the moſt eſſential ones to a degree comparable to that of the women: or rather not ſo imperfectly, as that all their boaſted ſkill in literary theory and anatomy, cannot ſupplement or atone for the deficiency? Nor theory, nor all the books that ever were written on that ſubject from the divine Hippocrates, who underſtood ſo much of phyſic, and ſo little of midwifery, down to Dr. Smellie, who is ſo great a man in both, will ever amount to ſo much as the practical experience of a regular bred midwife.

As to that ſuperior ſkill of the men in anatomy which is founded ſo high, againſt the women, I ſhall not imitate the men in their want of candor towards the female ſex in their availing themſelves of falſe arguments. I will not then take the benefit of the ſlight opinion which Celſus and Galen had of the depths of anatomy; they

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who contented themſelves with a groſs ſuperficial notion of the principal viſcera. I will not even deſire to countenance that contempt by the example of that great philoſopher Mr. Lock, the intimate friend, and even the counſellor of the Britiſh Eſculapius Sydenham, who paid a great deference to his phyſical knowledge; and yet this very Mr. Lock wrote an ingenious treatiſe (though not publiſhed by him) upon the inſignificance of the refinements of anatomy in the practice of phyſic. Neither will I here inſiſt on the abſurdities into which even the greateſt anatomiſts have fallen; as for example, *Pecquet*, the famous diſcoverer of the thoracic duct in the human body, who nevertheleſs adopted ſo extravagant a notion, as that digeſtion of food ought not to be promoted by exerciſe, but by drinking ſpirituous liquors, a practice to which himſelf fell a victim, dying ſuddenly at the anatomical theatre. It is only for thoſe who have a falſe cauſe to defend to ſhut their eyes againſt thoſe truths which ſeem againſt them. Thoſe on the contrary who defend purely the truth, know that one truth cannot hurt or exclude another truth, and

that all truths may very well coexiſt. It may be true that anatomy, though it does not give the nature of the elementary compoſition of parts intrinſic and too minute for the human ſenſe, ſince a new inciſion only preſents a new ſurface, much conduces however to ground the ſtudent in mechanical principles of great aſſiſtence to him in practice, of which they are doubtleſs the moſt ſolid foundation: yet that truth is not incompatible with another quite as much a truth, that midwifery can have no occaſion but for a general notion of the configuration of thoſe parts upon which it is exerciſed. A midwife, for example, may be a very ſafe and a very good one, without knowing whether the uterus is a hollow muſcle, or purely a tiſſue of membranes, arteries and veins: but if that aſcertainment is neceſſary, ſhe muſt wait for it till the anatomiſts have ſettled among them that point, which, like many other capital points of anatomy, is not however yet done. In ſhort, once more, a woman in labor requires a midwife to lay her, not an anatomiſt to diſſect her, or read lectures over the corpſe, he will be moſt

moſt likely to make of her, if he depends more on the refinements of anatomy, than on the dexterity of hand, and the ſuggeſtions of practical experience and common ſenſe.

If then, there are who can examine things fairly and with a ſincere deſire of determining according to the preponderance of reaſon, they cannot but on their own ſenſe of nature, on their own feelings, in ſhort, diſcern that no ignorance, of which the women are undiſtinguiſhingly taxed, can be an argument for the men's ſupplanting them in the practice of midwifery, on the ſtrength of that ſuperiority of their learning, ſo rarely not perfectly ſuperfluous, and often dangerous, if not even deſtructive both to mother and child. Conſult nature, and her but too much deſpiſed oracle common ſenſe; conſult even the writings of the men-midwives themſelves, and the reſulting deciſion will be, that great reaſon there is to believe, that the operation of the men-practitioners and inſtrumentarians puts more women and infants to cruel and torturous deaths, in the few countries where they are received, than the ignorance of the midwives

in all thoſe countries put together where the men-practitioners are not yet admitted, and where, for the good of mankind, it is to be hoped they never will.

I HAVE here ſaid few countries have hitherto countenanced men-midwives. That I preſume is too notorious to require proof: for even thoſe Saracen or Arabian phyſicians, Avicen, Rhazes, &c. who, by the by, are little more than ſervile tranſlators or copiſts of the Grecian ones, wrote only theoretically in quality of phyſicians; for it does not appear that they ever practiſed midwifery themſelves, nor ever got the practice of it by men introduced into their countries. Among the Orientals there is no ſuch being known as a man-midwife: that refinement of real barbariſm, under the ſpecious pretext of humanity, is happily unknown to them. But if it ſhould be ſaid, that the jealouſy ſo conſtitutional to the inhabitants of the warmer climes, has a ſhare in the excluſion of men-practitioners; the women have, at leaſt in that point, a weakneſs to thank for its production to them of ſo great a good, as the greater ſafety of their perſons

perſons and children, in that capital emergency of their lying-in. For, after all, the art of midwifery is, in the hands of men, like certain plants, which, by dint of a forcing culture, exhibit more of floriſh, or a broader expanſion; but beſides ever retaining a certain exotic appearance, they never come up to the virtue of thoſe ſpontaneouſly growing in the full vigor of a ſoil of nature's own choice for them. Art may often indeed improve nature, but can never be a ſupplement to her, where ſhe is eſſentially wanting. Deep learning may, in very extraordinary caſes perhaps, repair the errors, or aſſiſt the deficiencies of the manual function, but the deepeſt learning will never beſtow the manual function, nor indeed can in the ſame perſon exiſt, but at the expence of the manual function, which muſt have been in ſome meaſure neglected for it. And yet the greateſt practical ſkill that any man can with the utmoſt labor and experience acquire, will hardly ever equal the excellence in it of the women, Great Nature's choſen inſtruments for this work: an excellence by them attained with ſcarce any learning at all,

all, or at leaſt of that abſtruſe theoretical ſort, on which the men make their ſuperiority principally depend.

But that I may not herein be taxed of maintaining any thing that has only the air of a paradox, or of begging the queſtion, I ſhall implicitly, in the courſe of my anſwer to the following objection, endeavor to remove any remaining doubt on this head.

Objection the Eleventh.

In like manner, as there are particular parts of the human body which have their appropriate undertakers or protectors under their proper diſtinctive names, as oculiſts, dentiſts, and corn-cutters, who by making reſpectively one part their particular care and ſtudy, arrive at a greater perfection, at leaſt in the practical operations on it, than regular phyſicians or ſurgeons, whoſe object is the whole fabric; Why, by parity of reaſoning, ſhould not the men-practitioners in midwifery be preferable to the midwives, ſince a man has

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to his manual function ſuper-added a theory ſuperior to that of the women, who, it is confeſſed, ſtand ſometime in need of calling in the phyſician to their aſſiſtence? As a man then will have laid in a ſtock of medical knowledge, peculiarly adapted to the exigencies and diſorders incident to women during their pregnancy and lying-in, he muſt conſequently excel the midwife, or the phyſician ſingly conſidered; he who with ſo much greater convenience will have united in one perſon both their faculties, beſides that of the ſurgeon.

ANSWER.

THAT certain parts of the human body enjoy the protection of practitioners, who reſpectively devote themſelves to their ſervice, I confeſs. Such appropriations may alſo be beneficial, at leaſt, to the practitioners. I can even conceive, that a profeſſed dentiſt may clean, ſcale, and draw teeth, or an oculiſt couch a cataract, better than either a phyſician or ſurgeon. Theſe may in their reſpective practice be excelled by thoſe partial artiſts. But I much

much doubt, even as to these, whether their trusting too much to that partial excellence, does not sometimes do more mischief than good, for want of duly consulting the relation of such parts to the universal fabric, of which physicians and surgeons must be so much better judges. Galen does not appear in contradiction to common sense, where he observes, that to rectify a disorder of the eye, the head must be rectified, which cannot well be done without rectifying the whole body. In confirmation of which, I once myself knew a gentleman, whom a professed oculist, at Paris, assured of the loss of his eyes being infallible; and who upon his despondingly consulting a regular physician, was by him as positively assured, that those very condemned eyes might be saved by a proper regimen. The gentleman happily believed him, and his eye-sight was not only saved, but perfectly restored.

ANOTHER instance of the like nature occurs to me, which seems applicable to the dentist, and which I quote here from a translation of the learned and ingenious

Dr.

Dr. Huxham's obſervations on the conſtitution of the air.

"MANY years ago I knew a gentle-
"man of a hale, robuſt habit of body,
"who, from being too much addicted to
"the drinking of brandy, fell into a vio-
"lent jaundice, from which however he
"would have recovered well enough,
"would he have conformed himſelf to
"the advice of his *phyſicians:* but he on
"the contrary, becauſe his *gums* were
"very apt to bleed, and his *teeth* ſtunk
"from the *ſcorbutic taint*, put himſelf in-
"to the hands of an ignorant *pretender to*
"*phyſic for the cure of theſe inconveniencies.*
"This fellow immediately ſet about *ſca-*
"*ling his teeth*, and *rubbing his gums* with
"*his famous teeth-powder*, till at laſt, by
"perpetually fretting and irritating the
"looſe texture, he brought on ſuch a
"hemorrhage, that baffled all the ſtiptics
"that could be invented by the moſt ex-
"pert ſurgeons, and continuing to ſpout
"forth in ſmall ſtreams from the little ar-
"teries of the gums, which were now
"every where divided: in the ſpace of

"*ſixteen*

" *ſixteen hours* the poor man *died* through " mere loſs of blood."

THESE inſtances are however only adduced to juſtify that doubt which I expreſſed of theſe partial artiſts being *always* to be beneficially conſulted in thoſe local affections, to which their talent is ſuppoſed excluſively appropriated.

CORN-CUTTER is indeed a homely plain Engliſh term, but if the teeth give from the Latin the appellation of dentiſt, as the eye that of oculiſt, what name, taking it from the *part* in queſtion, will remain for that language, to give the men-practitioners of midwifery, in ſubſtitution to that hermaphrodite appellation, that abſurd contradictory one in terms, of *man*-mid*wife*, or to that new-fangled word *accoucheur*, which is ſo rank and barefaced a galliciſm? But let what name ſoever be given them, it can hardly be too burleſque an one, conſidering the groſs revolting impropriety of men, addicting themſelves to a profeſſion naturally ſo little made for them.

PAINT to yourſelf one of theſe ſage deep-learned *Cotts*, dreſſed for proceeding to

to officiate *, and preſenting himſelf with his pocket-nightgown, or looſe waſhing wrapper, a waiſtcoat without ſleeves, and thoſe of his ſhirt pinned up to the breaſts of his waiſtcoat; add to this, † fingers, if which not the niceſt paring the nails

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* Smellie. Treatiſe of midwifery, p. 339. *where it appears, that the above dreſs is reſerved for a man-midwife's maſquerade-habit in private practice, before ladies, not to frighten them; whereas to the poor women in hoſpitals his looking like a butcher, is it ſeems neceſſary, with baſes and an apron; the* ſteel *of courſe.* But if it is not too preſumptuous for me to offer ſo *learned* a gentleman as the Dr. a hint of improvement for his man-practitioner's toilette, upon theſe occaſions, I would adviſe, for the younger ones, a round-ear cap, with pink and ſilver bridles, which would greatly ſoften any thing too maſculine in their appearance on a function which is ſo thoroughly a female one. As to the older ones, a double-clout pinned under their chin could not but give them the air of very venerable old women.

† *If a man happens by great chance to have long taper fingers, it is a circumſtance ſo uncommon, that it is proverbially ſaid of him,* "*He has rare* midwife's *fingers.*" Nor was it quite unhumorouſly obſerved of one of the founders of the ſect of inſtrumentarians in England, remarkable for a raw-boned coarſe, clumſy hand, that no forceps he could *invent* of iron or ſteel, being more likely to hurt than his fingers, he had, at leaſt, that excuſe for recommending inſtruments.

will

will ever cure the ſtiffneſs and clumſineſs; and you will hardly deny its being ſomewhat puzzling, the giving a name to ſuch an heteroclite figure? Or rather can a too ludicrous one be aſſigned *it?*

THOSE however who will conſider this grave Doctor in his margery field-uniform, this ridiculous piece of mummery, in a light of ſerioufneſs, ſuch as the matter perhaps more juſtly deſerves, eſpecially combining with all the reſt, the idea of his crotchets, forceps, and the reſt of his bag of inſtruments, may think he leſs reſembles a prieſteſs of Lucina, than the ſacrificer, in a ſurplice, with his ſlaughtering-knife, to one of thoſe heathen deities whoſe horrid worſhip required human victims, which the poor lying-in women but too nearly reſemble.

BUT whether or not, in imitation of the dentiſt, or oculiſt, he receives his title from the particular part he has taken under his protection, ſo much is certain, that the ſame arguments, which militate for thoſe partial artiſts claiming their reſpective depart-

departments of the human body, will not avail the man-midwife. An oculiſt, a dentiſt, a corn-cutter, have no operations to perform but thoſe of which diſorders equally incident to both ſexes are the object. There is nothing in their practice repugnant to the nature of the male-ſex, nor to that reaſonable decency, which only requires that no ſacrifices of it ſhould be made in vain, or at leaſt not made to no better a purpoſe than to increaſe at once the danger and the pain of both mother and child, in whoſe favor it is ſacrificed, as it may be clearly proved to be oftenеſt the caſe. But of the chirurgical part of the man-midwife's pretention, I reſerve to treat after conſidering him in the capacity of a phyſician; in which a man may indeed be wanted, but in that of ſurgeon never, or at leaſt ſo very rarely, as not to atone for the dangers which attend the men forming themſelves into a ſet under the name of men-midwives.

WHERE there is no complication of any collateral diſorder with the geſtation and parturition of women, it is even a jeſt for men to pretend the neceſſity of any

ſtudy or practice to which women may not arrive, and even much excel them.

But where there exiſts the caſe of a ſingular conſtitution, or of ſymptoms declarative of other help being neceſſary than juſt the common one, that quickneſs of diſcernment, that peculiar ſhrewdneſs of the women, in diſtinguiſhing what is relative to their art from what is foreign from it, gives them the alarm in time, and if they have a juſt ſenſe of their duty, or but common ſenſe, they muſt know that ſuch diſorders cannot be *partial*, cannot therefore be conſidered as they are by the man-midwife, as ſubordinate to his particular province, relative as they are to the whole fabric or ſyſtem. All *partial* practice then is here abſolutely out of the queſtion, and now what help can, conſiſtently with good ſenſe, be expected from a man-midwife, who, under a natural impoſſibility of ever acquiring the female dexterity in the manual operation, cannot however, be ſuppoſed to attain even that imperfect degree of ſkill, without ſacrificing to the endeavours at it the time and pains in

ſtudy

ſtudy and practice, which are requiſite to form the able phyſician?

But, in fact, the men, that is to ſay, thoſe of that ſex who have the beſt underſtood all the refinements of anatomy, all the variety of female diſtempers, never that I can learn, attempted to invade the practical province of midwifery. The immortal *Harvey*, *Sydenham*, the great *Boerhave*, *Haller*, and numbers of others who have written ſo uſefully upon all the objects of midwifery, have never pretended or dropped a hint of the expedience of ſubſtituting men-midwives to the female ones. They contented themſelves with lamenting the ignorance of ſome midwives, from which has been drawn a very juſt inference of the neceſſity of their being better inſtructed; but even thoſe great men never choſe the character of practitioners themſelves, nor probably would have thought it any detraction from their merit to have it ſaid, they might make a bad figure in the function of delivering a woman.

WHOEVER then will conſider but how the common run of men-midwives actually are and muſt be formed, and aſſuredly the number of exceptions to the general inſufficiency cannot oppoſe the inference, muſt allow that, where a woman has diſtempers collateral to her pregnancy, with which they muſt alſo become dangerouſly complicated, ſhe muſt expoſe herſelf to the utmoſt hazard, in any confidence ſhe may place in a man-midwife.

THE truth is, that moſt of the dangerous lyings-in are ſo far from being likely to be relieved by a man-midwife, that it is often to the having relied upon his medical judgment, and eſpecially to his manual ſkill they are owing. But of the firſt only it is we are now here ſpeaking.

THE women captivated by that aſſiduity of the men-midwives, of which they only fail when they are not paid or likely to be paid, in ſome form or other, up to the value they ſet upon themſelves, lightly take for granted, that, as men, they are alſo capa-

capable phyſicians. It is enough, in ſhort, for theſe practitioners not to be women; for the women to think they can preſcribe for them in all diſorders. A miſtake this, often big with the utmoſt danger to them.

THE men-midwives, in general, have never, at the moſt, carried their ſtudies beyond the diſorders commonly incident to pregnant women: the knowledge of all the other poſſibly collateral ones, is what even the leaſt modeſt of them will hardly claim, unleſs to the profoundly ignorant, and is in fact ſcarce leſs than impoſſible to one who has applied himſelf eſſentially to the manual function. In ſuch caſes the ignorance of a midwife can hardly be greater than that of the men-practitioners, and muſt be leſs dangerous from her leſs of pretention. Her conſciouſneſs of her own want of ſufficient light, will engage her readily to ſtate the exigency to ſome able and experienced phyſician, whom ſhe muſt allow, in ſuch caſes, to be her ſuperior judge: whereas the other, the man-midwife, acknowledges no greater authority than that with which he is pleaſ-

ed to inveſt himſelf. He ſtands, in virtue of a diſtinct buſineſs, and a buſineſs for which he never was made, of a ſudden the ſelf-conſtituted ſovereign dictator and inſpector-general of all female diſorders whatſoever, where the woman is with child, that is to ſay, where the caſe is only thereby rendered much the more nice and difficult, and, not rarely, does he continue under the ſame pretext, to extend his practice to where there is no pregnancy at all in the caſe. And yet aſk him for his titles, they are all implicitly dependent on or ſubordinate to that ſame mid-wifery, for which he is ſo naturally unqualified, even if a due ſtudy and exerciſe of it would permit thoſe avocations, that would contribute to accompliſh him in the ſo neceſſary general knowledge of phyſic. But indeed why need he acquire it, ſince it is ſo commonly taken for granted, or that he is believed upon his own word, eſpecially if he is backed with a diploma, for form's ſake, that may have coſt him little or nothing of medical ſtudy, or indeed of any thing but the amount of the fees for it?

YET how ſerious, how important is it for women, if they tender their own lives, and that of the precious burthen of which they are the depoſitaries, to make that diſtinction between the phyſician and the midwife, which they ſeem ſo little to make! How little do they conſider, what nevertheleſs is ſtrictly true, that a man can never at the beſt be but an indifferent practitioner of midwifery, though he may be an excellent one in phyſic; but that as bad a midwife as he can be, he muſt be yet, if poſſible, a worſe phyſician, if he attempts to throw both profeſſions into one, and exerciſe them jointly! They are incompatible, from the juſtly preſumable impoſſibility of one man doing juſtice to the practice of the one, unleſs at the expence of the ſtudy of the other: by which other, to obviate cavils, I repeat it, I mean the general practice of phyſic, which comprehends the ſpeculative part of midwifery, as well as all other branches underſtood to be the province of the phyſician. This diſtinction then I make, becauſe, as to the diſeaſes purely incident to

pregnant women, experimental practice will rather assist the medical study of them: and it is in that part only the men-midwives can make any figure at all, and that not a superior one to midwives who are regularly bred, and who have, in their favor, their excellence in the manual function besides.

ONCE more, in complicated cases, the most dreadful mistakes are to be dreaded from those common-men-midwives, who so groundlessly erect themselves into physicians on those occasions. A purge, a venesection, or any other prescription injudiciously ordered, may be the occasion proximate or remote of death to both mother and child; yet a woman, at least, *ought* not to expect better from one of these practitioners who, for the most part, has neither study nor experience in general physic; nor more than a smattering of anatomy, joined to the index-learning of dispensatories. Such a man-midwife can never have thoroughly made himself master of the course of the fluids, nor of the order of their circulation. Their relation

to

to the ſolids, and the efficacy of medicines upon both, can hardly be ſufficiently known to a man, who muſt have been too much employed in trying to form a hand never to be formed, and in attendances on the practice of his midwifery, to acquire thoſe collateral requiſites for the effectual multiplication of his profeſſions.

YET this man void of knowledge, experience, obſervation, and, in conſequence, of phyſical ability, ſhall boldly decide on the expedience of an internal remedy, of which he does not know the power or operation; of a veneſection, of which he can but gueſs at the conſequence; and of a narcotic, of which he is unaware of the danger. In all which, obſerve, he may poſſibly ſometimes be tolerably right, in caſes where there is *no* complication; that is to ſay, in caſes when a midwife, duly bred, is as ſufficient as the beſt man-practitioner. But then ſhe is moreover not only quicker of apprehenſion, as to danger, where the caſe appears complicated, but readier to call in proper help where ſhe diſcerns it to be above her reach, and conſequently above that of the man-midwife,

who

who muſt be equally or rather more at a loſs, becauſe his boaſted theory will ſerve only to puzzle him, or what is worſe yet, ſince a ſhew muſt be made of doing ſomething, *will* moſt probably determine him improperly, if not fatally, to random preſcriptions, in points out of his ſphere of knowledge, or rote of practice.

MANY a man who to-day undertakes preſcribing for a fever, for a fit, a convulſion in a lying-in woman, only becauſe he appears in the character of a man-midwife, would have been aſhamed the day before he had taken up that buſineſs to give himſelf out for a phyſician. He would have been afraid of ordering any thing for her if ſhe was not his patient, as to lying-in, and would not, even after aſſuming the profeſſion of midwifery, perhaps order any thing for the ſame woman, out of the time in which his office is ſuppoſed neceſſary. This plainly proves, that many of thoſe gentlemen are weak enough to imagine, that the man-midwife implies the phyſician, though the greateſt phyſicians that ever were never dreamt of ſuch an abſurdity,

dity, as that the phyſician implied the midwife, whoſe maſter and inſtructor he rather is, in points highly uſeful indeed at times to her profeſſion, but in which that profeſſion does not conſiſt.

I DO not however charge *all* the men-wid-wives with ſo much modeſty, as to confine their ſtriking out of midwifery into phyſic, to the women lying-in, or to the time of their lying-in, ſince there have not been wanting ſome who, with equal ignorance, but ſuperior effrontery, have intrepidly hoiſted, the ſtandard of a general knowledge of phyſic, and having originally inſinuated themſelves into families in the character of men-midwives, have eaſily maintained their ground in them afterwards on the foot of phyſicians. A circumſtance not much to be wondered at, conſidering the endearment of ſuch an office as that of a man-midwife, and the aſcendant it muſt ſerve to give them over the heads of families, even in points where a midwife can have no ſhadow of pretention, for interfering. In the mean time, let any one of ſenſe or common humanity conſider but the conſequences

ſequences of this dangerous admiſſion of the ſufficiency of a man-midwife in thoſe complicated caſes, which require the conſultation of a regular phyſician; to ſay nothing, for the preſent, of the other objections already mentioned, or which I ſhall hereafter more at large diſcuſs, and the reſult muſt be, to allow that the medical pretentions, or indeed any pretentions, of theſe men-practinoners, cannot be too much diſcouraged, nor confidence more miſ-placed than in them. For once that they may hit the mark by chance, they will often take the part of the diſtemper inſtead of that of the patient; they will do what they have only a groſs gueſs of being the right, not what they know to be ſo: and phyſic, at beſt, but a conjectural ſcience, muſt in them want even the common grounds of conjecture.

INSTEAD then of the dangerous ſelf-ſufficiency of theſe complex ſmatterers, you have in a plain midwife, ſuppoſing her regularly bred, and duly qualified for her profeſſion (for I am no more an advocate for ignorance in the women than in the men) one, who, being called in time, will

duly

duly conſider, and obſerve the conſtitution of the perſon that wants her aſſiſtence. If nothing appears extraordinary, or out of the common-rules in her patient's conſtitution and conformation, ſhe needs only lay down for her the previous courſe of management, and as the hour of delivery approaches prediſpoſe her properly: a point in which the men muſt be groſſly deficient, for want of that ſkill of prognoſtic inherent to the women, from their particular delicacy and ſhrewdneſs in the *faculty of touching*; upon which more depends than can be well imagined. Wherever a caſe occurs to a midwife, ſo complicated as to be above her reach, her intereſt, her reputation, her duty, all conſpire to preſcribe to her a timely application to a regular phyſician. She communicates her doubts or difficulties to him, who, at the ſame time that he receives a juſt information from her of the ſtate of things, combines it with his own knowledge of the human conſtitution. He does not confound, as the man-midwife does, ideas ſo different as thoſe of the manual operation, and the medicinal preſcription. The object of the phyſician, being the ſame as that of the midwife, the prevention

vention or alleviation of pain to the mother, and the greateſt ſafety to the mother and child, but preferentially that of the mother; there is this advantage to both mother and child, that all harſhneſs of practice, all the violenter remedies will be as much corrected as can be done, conſiſtent with the ſafety of mother and child, by the midwife's tenderneſs, by which the phyſician will at the ſame time be above the being miſled into omiſſions of any thing abſolutely requiſite. In ſhort, on ſuch occaſions, they ſerve to temper one another. A truly great phyſician will not diſdain the lights furniſhed him by her practical experience, and ſhe knows the bounds of her mechanical duty and profeſſion too well, to interfere with his ſuperior intellectual province, in thoſe points ſubmitted to it. A pragmatical man-midwife, on the ſtrength of his miſerable half-learning, would think it a derogation from his character, to call in a phyſician in ſupplement to his deficiency, of which he is always aſhamed, though indeed he has ſometimes the excuſe of himſelf not knowing it. Then when a fatal accident has happened, under his hands,

againſt

againſt which, with more knowledge he might have guarded, or which with leſs of preſumption or dependence on himſelf he might have prevented, by procuring previous or collateral advice; he thinks himſelf abundantly acquitted by laying the blame on *occult cauſes*. Even the great man-midwife, *Mauriceau* himſelf, has made uſe of that trite exploded apology *: where he "expreſſly ſays, "that a ſudden unexpect-"ed death of his patient was one of thoſe "FATALITIES, that not all the human "prudence can prevent."

BUT that I may not here incur the leaſt charge of unfairneſs, as if I meant by this quotation any thing ſo abſurd or unjuſt, as that in the labors of pregnant women, as well as in other diſeaſes unconnected with them, there may not ſometimes happen accidents impoſſible to be foreſeen, as well under the care of the beſt phyſician, called

* *A la verité* Mauriceau *raporte cette mort inopineé à une* CAUSE OCCULTE, *puiſqu'il dit expreſſement que* "ce "fut un de ces ſortes de malheurs de la deſtinée que "toute la prudence humaine ne peut pas eviter." *C'eſt auſſi l'opinion de* la Motte. LEVRET, p. 272.

in

in by the very beſt midwife, as under the moſt ignorant aſſuming man-midwife, I ſhall here introduce another quotation from the ſame *Levret*, that will eſpecially ſhew the ladies, and all parties concerned, to what an imaginary ſafety, ſo much, and even the very point ſought for, is ſacrificed as is ſacrificed, in preferring the men-practitioners to the midwives.

* " M. de la Motte ſays, that for the " fifth time he laid the wife of a glover " of Valogne, the 16th of March, 1704; " that the woman was but an hour in " her labor-pains, and that he delivered " her with all the facility imaginable; " that he left her upon the couch till he " had given her ſome broth, after which " he recommended her to the care of the " nurſe, and went *where his buſineſs called* " *him*. He adds, that he had time but " juſt to bleed two perſons in the neigh- " bourhood, before he was fetched away " in haſte to ſee the patient he had juſt " laid, whom he found *dead* upon the bed.

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* Levret, p. 269.

" The

" The cauſe of this *death* was inſtantly " manifeſt to him from the ſtream of " *blood*, which ran about the floor, and " even penetrated to the apartment be- " neath, after ſoaking through the bed " itſelf, in which there remained clots of " blood of an extraordinary ſize.

" This author adds, in the reflexions " at the end of this obſervation, that this " delivery had been both more eaſy and " more expeditious than any this woman " had precedently had: and he notes, " that theſe *melancholic accidents* are not " *without example*, ſince ſuch ladies as the " princeſs of . . . . and madam la Preſi- " dente de ——— with *numbers* of *others*, " have, on the like occaſion, undergone " the ſame *fate*, as her he here treats of. " Theſe are, according to him, *proofs* that " all human ſcience and dexterity *often* " cannot prevent the *like misfortunes*, ſince " theſe *great ladies* had been lain by the " moſt *celebrated men-midwives*."

Now I might here, without much probability of being contradicted, aver, that

where ſuch accidents, ſaid to happen ſo *frequently* and inevitably, ſhould happen under the hands of midwives, there would be but one voice among the men-practitioners and their credulous adherents, to impute them to the ignorance and malpractice of the women. The plea of *occult cauſes* would be hooted at in them, tho' receivable, it ſeems, from the men.

Not however to imitate what I condemn in them, a groſs want of candor to the women, of whom, by the by, the very beſt of the men-practitioners have learnt all the laudable part of practice, I ſhall allow that among thoſe frequent examples, of ſudden deaths upon delivery, ſome few might perhaps be of thoſe unaccountable ſurprizes with which nature mocks human ignorance; but then it muſt be allowed too, that not all of them admit of that favorable ſolution. The truth is that nature, to thoſe who have ſtudied her courſe, and watched her motions with a due ſpirit of practical obſervation, hardly ever but gives warning enough to prepare proper obviative methods. It is not here the place to enter into the diſcuſſion of thoſe deaths

deaths by ſudden hemorrhage upon delivery, of which I ſhall hereafter attempt to give a more ſatisfactory account, as well as of the meaſures of prevention, than Levret. My end in the preceding quotation is to ſhow;

FIRST, that by the confeſſion of the men-midwives themſelves, the moſt fatal accidents *frequently*. and *inevitably* happen under them in ſpite of all their *ſcience* and *dexterity!*

SECONDLY, to offer to the reader a reflexion for himſelf to judge of the validity of it, to wit, that, not only in the caſes of the hemorrhage, but in many others, where there is a complication of diſorders with the ſtate of pregnancy and parturition, much of the ſafety of mother and child muſt depend on that general medical knowledge, to which the men-midwives have ſo little grounds of pretention. Nor indeed, for the ſymptoms of neceſſity for reſorting to medical help, have they the ſame ſhrewd prognoſtic or acute ſenſe as the experienced women, who much

ſooner perceive the danger before it is too late, and are neither with-held by a falſe ſhame, nor by a criminal or ſenſeleſs preſumption, from calling in proper aſſiſtence. Such at leaſt has been and ſtill is their practice in all ages, and in all countries, where the matters of pregnancy and lyings-in are committed to them. The great object of the man-midwife is to impoſe ſo falſe a notion on his patient, as that his partial knowledge is ſufficient to every thing. The conſequence of which is, that if he is not too officious, too pragmatical, by way of oſtentation of his art, in common caſes, that is to ſay, where there is no complication of diſorders, every thing may paſs off tolerable well, till the criſis of labor-pains. And in that criſis I defy him, with all his learning, to equal the female ſkill and cleverneſs, not only for leſſening the ſufferings of the patient, but for facilitating the happy iſſue of her burden.

But where there is a complicated caſe, dependent on the phyſician's art, then the truſting to thoſe men-dabblers in midwifery is a folly that may be fatal to both

mother

mother and child, or, at the beſt, the delivery will have been rendered more painful, more laborious, more big with danger, for thoſe precautions having been neglected, which can be ſo little ſuppoſed to occur to the common run of men-midwives in caſes foreign from their rote of practice. Yet it is preciſely in thoſe diſorders collaterally contingent to pregnancy, and no diſorder does that ſtate exclude, that the greateſt ſkill and knowledge of phyſic are required. Then it is, that not only the preſervation of the mother claims regard, and certainly the preferable one, but even that of the child is no indifferent point. And to ſave both, the ſtate of the mother's conſtitution muſt be carefully conſidered. Thus the combination of the diſeaſe with the pregnancy, the due regard to the mother as well as that to the child, form a triple object that takes in a compaſs of comprehenſion to which no midwife will pretend, nor can be imagined to exiſt in the mere man-practitioner of midwifery. Such a nicety of obſervation does not ſeem to be the province of a manual operator, and indeed uſeleſs to him in that character. And as he will be more likely

to truſt to conjectures, which no ſufficient grounds of ſtudy will have juſtified his preſuming to truſt, he muſt oftener take the part of the diſeaſe than of the patient. It is well if ſometimes, diſconcerted at the exceſs of a danger of which he does not underſtand the origin or nature, he does not, in default of the head, employ the hand, and engage the mother in a premature or forced delivery of the child, to the imminent hazard of the lives of both. Now comes the chirurgical operation in play; and we ſhall now ſee, that the ingraftment of the ſurgeon upon the midwife, deſerves equally at leaſt reprobation with that of the phyſician.

But before I enter on this diſquiſition, I am to obſerve, that this objection to the ſurgeon's commencing midwife, does not in the leaſt attack the merit of that reſpectable body of men, the ſurgeons. No one can honor their profeſſion more than I do: I even readily grant, that their ſkill in anatomy is of ſervice to midwifery itſelf, into which it throws a great light. It would be eaſy for me to name, if requiſite, ſeveral

ral ſurgeons, who are not only an honor to their country, from their excellence in an art ſo beneficial to mankind, but an ornament to ſociety, from their extenſive humanity and charity. Theſe, I am ſo far from thinking, will hold themſelves honored by the men-midwives attempting to make a common-cauſe with them, that I rather depend on their bearing witneſs on the part of the women in this cauſe, which is indeed the cauſe of Nature, of that Nature which they ſtudy ſo practically, conſequently ſo uſefully, and with which they are ſo converſant. I am perſuaded they can even furniſh me with arguments, from their ſuperior ſtore of knowledge, in ſupplement to my deficiencies. The ſurgeons muſt look on theſe profeſſors of midwifery as a kind of amphibious beings, hard to define, whoſe claim exhibits rather the deformity of a preternatural excreſcence, or wen growing out of the chirurgical art, than the becomingneſs of a natural member of it. Moſt of the firſt founders of this new ſect of inſtrumentarians in this country were, or I am greatly miſinformed, neglected phyſicians, or ſurgeons without practice, who in ſupplement to their

reſpective deficiencies, greedily ſnatched at the occaſion at that time of a prevailing whim in France, of employing men-midwives, with juſt ſuch a rage of faſhion, as ſome of the ladies there prefer valet-de-chambres to waiting maids. This novelty then appeared to practitioners deſpairing of buſineſs enough in their own way, an excellent ſcheme for eking out their ſcanty cloth with this bit of a border, of which by degrees they have made to themſelves a whole cloak. In ſhort novelty joined, to the much exagerated objections to perhaps a few inſufficient midwives, brought in and eſtabliſhed a remedy yet worſe than the diſeaſe. Their ſucceſs encouraged others; and now behold ſwarms of pupils pullulating, and forming on the models before-mentioned. Thus two or three maggots have produced thouſands. Iron and ſteel are not tender: and yet it was by the pretended neceſſity of reſorting to inſtruments made of theſe metals, that theſe out-caſts of either profeſſion effectuated their introduction into a buſineſs ſo little made for them. Then it was, that not with the leaſt ſquinting view to filthy lucre, but purely out of ſtark love and kindneſs

kindneſs to the women, that theſe redreſſers of wrongs, armed with their crotchets, and other weapons of death, took the field on the hardy adventure of reſcuing the fair ſex out of the dreadful hands of the ignorant midwives. But as to the validity of that plea of theirs, of the neceſſity of employing inſtruments, I reſerve to treat of it at large in its place in my ſecond part.

HERE I ſhall only requeſt the reader to remember, what has been ſaid of the indecent, ſuperficial, and even cruel method of training up pupils in this upſtart profeſſion. But if I was to add here my having been credibly informed, that there are novices who watch the diſtreſſes of poor pregnant women, even in private lodgings, where, under a notion of learning the buſineſs, they make thoſe poor wretches, hired for their purpoſe, undergo the moſt inhuman vexation, in a condition ſo fit to inſpire compaſſion, and where thoſe ſcenes muſt be rather a ſchool of brutality than of art: if I was to urge, what from the great probability of the thing I firmly believe, that more than one unhappy creature

ture has fallen a victim to the rudiments of these novices; that especially not long ago, one of them in a hurry and confusion of presumption and ignorance, instead of the after-birth from a woman, tore away, by mistake, her womb itself, which occasioned, of all necessity, the poor creature's dying in unutterable agonies of torture: if I was yet to go farther and assert, that even not one of the least eminent men-midwives pulled off the arms of a child in his attempt to extract it, and very gravely laid them upon the table; what would be replied to me? It would be said I had invented these horrors, or forged such raw-head and bloody-bones stories, purely in favour of my own cause. And to this objection, while I produce no proof, and for my producing no proof other reasons may be obviously assigned, besides that of those cases being non-existent, some of which I am very certain are true, and firmly believe all the rest; to this objection then I say, I make no reply. The reader, who will have considered this matter, may easily decide within himself the degree of probability in such allegations. But what objection will stand good against authorities

ties of reaſonings and facts, produced from the writings of the *men-midwives* themſelves? Will they be ſuſpected of partiality or aggravation of things againſt themſelves?

I SHALL here ſelect one of perhaps the moſt excuſable examples from the circumſtances accompanying it, or it would probably not have been produced by the author a man-midwife, to ſhew, by the confeſſion of the men-midwives themſelves, the inſufficiency of their diſcernment, whether a child is dead or not.

" EDGE-TOOLS and crotchets naturally " inſpire horror, and though they *ought* " not to be employed unleſs on a dead " child, it is well known the mother is " not always *ſafe* from the effect of them. " Beſides there are *no ſigns* of the death of " a child, though he ſhould have ſtuck in " the paſſage for ſeveral days . . . . . *certain* " *enough* to authorize a recourſe to a me- " thod which infallibly *kills* it, if it is not " dead before. This is ſo true, that who- " ever will turn over the authors antient

" and

" and modern, on this ſubject, there is not " *one* of them that gives us *ſatisfaction* on " this point. On the contrary, they *all* " ſeem *agreed* on the *inſufficiency* of theſe " ſigns, and there are even *few* of them " who do not bring examples to ſupport " this uncertainty.

" HERE follows one taken from the " obſervations of Saviard, p. 367. This " author ſays, that a chirurgical operator, " whoſe name he *prudently* ſuppreſſes, be- " ing ſent for in aid of a midwife *, to

* This will doubtleſs be laid hold of as one proof, that midwives have, in caſes where they are puzzled, been forced to have recourſe to men-practitioners: but I have no where ſaid, there were not ſome midwives unequal to their buſineſs. The ſequel will ſhew, that this moſt probably was one of them, and the caſe was not much mended by the aſſiſtent ſhe called in. A little more patience, though I confeſs there is ſome room to think it in this ſo long lingering caſe excuſably exhauſted, would have prevented the murder of the child: but as the concomitant circumſtances are not ſpecified, I cannot pretend to determine that point. All I ſhall ſay is, that there is not hardly one caſe in a thouſand, in which nature does not know her own time beſt, and does not take it kindly to be hurried. It has been known, that ſometimes the quickeſt deliveries have been the moſt fatal, and the moſt liable to ſudden death, by conſequent hemorrhages.

" extract

" extract a child that had ſtuck ſix days " in the paſſage, and which he *thought* " dead, from ſeveral of the ſigns moſt eſ- " ſential to conviction, it happened how- " ever, that having opened with his *biſ-* " *tory* the teguments and membranes which " occupy the as yet unoſſified ſpace, at " the commiſſure of the parietal bones " with the fontanelle, it happened (ſaid " he) that on opening this place with his " biſtory, introducing his crotchet at this " opening, and having fixed it in one of " the parietals, he drew out the child, " who began to cry *piercingly*, all hurt as " he was by ſo *large* a *wound*, that there " came out of it more than an egg full of " its *brains*, which made a *cruel* ſight in " the eyes of the by-ſtanders, and a very " mortifying one for the operator.

" It were to be wiſhed that this was " the *only* example: but I will not relate " any *more*; it is eaſy to think one " cannot be too *circumſpect* in the matter " of ſuch relations. Levret, p. 77."

Now

Now I, who have not the ſame reaſon for *circumſpection* in this caſe, as Monſieur Levret, with ſtrict regard both to matter of fact and to candor, *agree* with *him*, in averring, that this is not the *only* example perhaps, by thouſands, of the raſh reſort to the expedient of *opening* the head, and extracting the child with the crotchet; an expedient which, as Dr. Smellie obſerves, (p. 248.) "*produced a* GENERAL CLAMOR "*among the women, who obſerved, that when* "*recourſe was had to the aſſiſtance of a man-*" *midwife, either the mother or child, or both* "*were loſt.*" Now of not filling up the cry of thoſe women, I muſt own I ſhould be moſt aſhamed. Eſpecially when the good Dr. by way of curing our fears and *weak* apprehenſions, and of ſhewing the nonſenſicalneſs of them, firſt very gravely tells you the inſufficiency of *all* hitherto invented inſtruments, and only modeſtly concludes, that the forceps of his own ingenious contrivance, is indeed the beſt, but ſtill imperfect. His homage to truth would however not have been ſo imperfect as it is if he had ſaid that inſtruments may be totally left out of good practice, and that no

"*arti-*

"*artificial hands*", as he calls them, can, in any caſe, conſtitute a worthy ſupplement to the *natural* ones; no not even to his own, ſuppoſing iron and ſteel to be ever ſo little leſs tender than his fingers.

* But why do theſe gentry then ſo much inſiſt on the abſolute neceſſity there is of *ſometimes* having recourſe to inſtruments? —— Why? The motive for that inſiſtence is ſo tranſparent, that not to ſee through it would indeed be blindneſs. it is the capital, and perhaps the only plea that has the leaſt ſhadow of plauſibility for the men to intrude themſelves into the women's buſineſs of midwifery. The women do not pretend to the art of handling thoſe inſtruments, and would be very ſorry to pretend to it. Nor do thoſe mid-

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* *Dr.* Smellie *has himſelf* (p. 403.) *ranked among the cauſes of ſudden death to women by violent floodings after delivery the following one*; "*if in ſeparating the* placenta *the* accoucheur *has* ſcratched *or* tore *the inner ſurface or membrane of the* womb." *But if unpared nails, or the rough hands of a man, may cauſe ſuch a dreadful accident, what may not be dreaded from iron and ſteel inſtruments, blindly thruſt into parts of a ſcarce leſs tender texture than the apple of the eye? But of that more hereafter.*

wives,

wives, who are ſufficiently ſkilled in their art, ever need the ſupplemental aid of them: whatever is done with them is as well, and infinitely more ſafely done without them: ſo that the only grounds of introducing men into that female practice is eſſentially falſe. The making then the ſurgeons art a pandar to a ſordid intereſt, by the incorporation of midwifery with it, is, in fact, engrafting on a noble ſtock, a ſcion of another one, both which would bear very well ſeparate, but, thus joined, can produce nothing but a vile poiſonous fruit.

If there could be ſuch a thing as laughing in a matter of ſuch general importance to human kind as the fixing of this point, there could hardly be any refraining from it, with regard to the conduct of the men-midwives, eſpecially in Paris. There the novices of them, ſenſible of the natural defect there muſt be in men-practitioners, apply for improvement to the regular midwives. There is particularly, among others, one Madam Clavier, who, when I knew her, lived in the Rue de St. André, that gave leſſons, at ſo much a-head, to the

the men-ſtudents of midwifery. Yet theſe ſame men have no ſooner got a ſmattering of all that is valuable in the profeſſion, for beyond a practical ſmattering at moſt nature refuſes them further progreſs; they, I ſay, have no ſooner acquired a little uſeful inſight from theſe laudably communicative midwives, but they are the firſt to ſwell the cry againſt them of, "oh theſe "*ignorant midwives!*"——or "*what can be* "*expected from a woman?*" And what is more yet, among women it is, that they can make this equally ungrateful and falſe clamor prevail. And women, in a point of the utmoſt importance to themſelves, prove that the men have, in fact, not quite a wrong idea of their weakneſs, ſince they are weak enough to countenance a notion, that ſo unjuſtly diſhonors them in every ſenſe. But that is not enough. What one ſhould imagine, women eſpecially would conſider, is that this notion received with its conſequential excluſion of thoſe of their own ſex, tends to have their own pains aggravated, and the ſafety not only of themſelves but of their ſo naturally dear children, yet more endangered.

For the truth of this increaſe of pain and danger from the practice of the inſtrumentarians, it is not to any repreſentations from me only, who may be ſuppoſed too intereſted a party, but to reaſon, and even to reaſon's beſt miſtreſs, Nature herſelf, that I appeal. I appeal even to the very writings of the moſt celebrated men-midwives themſelves, to which I would refer all who are ſincere enough with themſelves to be reſolved to embrace truth when diſcovered to them. It is then even in the writings of thoſe men-practitioners, that a lover of truth might find enough to ſatisfy himſelf, that all the mighty pretences of the men-midwives to ſuperiority of ſkill and practice to the women are falſe and abſurd. Look into *Deventer*, *Peu*, *La Motte*, *Mauriceau*, *Levret*, *Smellie*, &c. and you will find that, except their accounts of the *innocent* manual function, in which midwives muſt ſo much excel them; except *their* pernicious practical part, on which they ſo tediouſly inſiſt, by way of recommending each ſome particular inſtrument that is to *uſher* him into employment, and increaſe his profit, in which noble

noble view he takes care to decry the inſtruments of all others, or at leaſt prefer his own; except the ſcientific jargon of hard Latin and Greek words, ſo fit to throw duſt in the eyes of the ignorant, and give their work an air of deep learning; except what they have pillaged from regular phyſicians and ſurgeons, who have treated upon theſe matters: except in ſhort all the quacking verboſeneſs of the various hiſtories of their exploits and deliverances of diſtreſſed women, and you will find the merit of their whole works ſhrink to little or nothing, under the appraiſement of common ſenſe and true practical knowledge. The moſt that you will find in them, is, hard or lingering labors, oftenеſt precipitated fatally to the mother, or at leaſt to the child; they hardly, you may be ſure, carrying their candor ſo far, as always to mention when it has proved ſo to *both*; of which however the tenor of their practice with inſtruments gives you but too much room to preſume the probability. In ſhort thoſe caſes, of which their works are chiefly patched up, are little better than ſo many quack-advertiſements; and their beſt exploits

therein recounted not a whit preferable; nor indeed ſo practically juſt, as what would appear in the common daily practice of a regular well-bred midwife, that ſhould keep a regiſter of her deliveries. There might not indeed appear ſo much anatomy in her deſcriptions, but, I am very ſure, there would be couched in them much more ſolid inſtruction. Not that I therefore have not the higheſt deference to the true phyſicians, the true ſurgeons. But as far as I can preſume to judge, it is not in the works of the men-midwives, that the beſt lights in midwifery are to be looked for. They are themſelves for every thing that is worth reading in their writings indebted, both to the phyſicians and ſurgeons, whoſe arts they have deſpiſed enough to think, they may be well enough learnt collaterally and ſubordinately to the mechanical operation of midwifery, as well as obliged to the midwives, to whom they *ought* at leaſt to go to ſchool, tho' ſure to rail at their *ignorance* the minute after being taught by them. In ſhort, the moſt valuable lights thrown into this ſubject are undoubtedly furniſhed by thoſe great men

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Boerhave, Haller, Heiſter, the great Harvey, and other the like excellent phyſicians and ſurgeons, not one of whom however, I preſume, in the way of making a trade of it, ever delivered a woman in his life.

NAY! was any accident requiring a chirurgical operation to befall a pregnant woman, I ſhould think the application would be more ſafely made to a thorough regular-bred ſurgeon, than to one of the common run of theſe men-midwives; and the exceptions are ſo few, they are hardly worth making. The reaſon too for ſuch a preference is obvious and natural. A regular ſurgeon probably would not only be more conſummately ſkilful and expert in his general notions, both theoretical and practical, ſo far as ſurgery was in the queſtion, but would not, from any thing only *partial* in his profeſſion, have the ſame temptation of bringing into play a horrid apparatus of murderous inſtruments, to ſhow the importance and utility of that anatomical midwifery of theirs, all the art of which conſiſts in the violences it offers to

Nature. What would be to be done, the true ſurgeon could hardly do worſe than the pragmatical man-midwife, and moſt probably would perform it much more artiſt-like, except perhaps in the ſole point of ſtriking a crotchet into the brain-pan of a live-child, or needleſsly tearing open, with iron and ſteel, parts ſo tender and ſo delicate, as hardly to bear the touch of even the ſofteſt hand, guarded with all precaution. He would not, in ſhort, be ſo forward to uſe means deſtructively dangerous to both mother and child, and at the beſt often to ruin a woman for being a mother for ever after.

UPON the whole then, if any one will dare give his own underſtanding fair play, againſt the powers of prejudice and intereſted impoſition, it cannot but, on a fair examination ſatisfy him, that that ſtrange anomalous complex creature of the three arts, phyſic, ſurgery and midwifery, is moſt likely to excel in neither. IT may by great chance be an indifferent phyſician; IT muſt be in this reſpect a dangerous ſurgeon, but IT can never be any thing but

but a deſpicable midwife; or if that favorite name of *accoucheur*, IT is ſo fond of aſſuming, ſhould not be popular enough from its galliciſm, let IT change it for the Latin one of *Pudendiſt*: a word of not one jot a more pedantic coinage than *Dentiſt*, or *Oculiſt*, but of which moreover the propriety of the ſound may ſomewhat atone for the pitiful play of words it contains, and which can yet ſcarcely be more pitiful than the object of its application.

OBJECTION the Twelfth.

IT is not probable, that the men-practitioners would have come into the vogue in which we ſee them, if numbers of inſtances were not to be produced in their favor, of their having terminated happily many labors, in which they have been preferably employed, and to the excluſion of the midwives.

ANSWER.

THIS only proves, what none in their ſenſes will deny, that the greater part of the caſes of labor are ſo mild, that not

even that faultineſs of the men-practitioners, which is palpably owing to an incurable imperfection of Nature, not, in ſhort, all that is bungling or deficient in their preliminary diſpoſition and manual operation, can abſolutely fruſtrate the kindneſs of that Nature, of which theſe intruders are not aſhamed of aſſuming the honor. But that inference of the men in favor of themſelves is as ridiculous as it is falſe. In thoſe caſes of labor, which are much the leſs frequent, and require no extraordinary aſſiſtence, the utmoſt of the real merit of theſe bunglers is only of the negative kind: that is to ſay, they have not deſtroyed the mother nor the child; and indeed, every thing conſidered, great is the praiſe to them thereof. It is not always, even in naturally eaſy labors, that the women who employ men to lay them have not a harder bargain of them.

But even in theſe propitious labors, the miſchief done to a lying-in woman, by employing of a man to the excluſion of a midwife, is not a ſmall one, if pain is an evil, and the leſſening that evil a deſirable good.

good. For certainly there can hardly be a caſe of lying-in ſuppoſed, in which ſome *labor-pains* are not felt. The bringing forth children in pain, ſtands hitherto the irreverſible decree of nature, from which few women can promiſe themſelves a total exemption. But theſe pains, if they cannot be entirely ſpared, to the lying-in woman, will always admit of actual or preventive alleviation. That alleviation can be no inconſiderable object to women, who are by their nature ſo tender and ſo impatient of pain. Even then in the proſpect and preſence of the very gentleſt labors, there are two natural points to be reſpectively attended to. The one is the prediſpoſition of every thing, according to art, ſo as to render the expected labor-pains as moderate as poſſible. The ſecond is in the manual function, at the actual criſis of the delivery. Now, in both theſe points, for reaſons above-deduced of the ſuperior aptitude in women derived to them from Nature herſelf, a woman may reaſonably depend not only on a more ſimpathizing cheriſhment, but a more efficacious aſſiſtence from thoſe of her own ſex. There

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are a thouſand little tender attentions ſuggeſted by nature, and improved by experience, that a midwife can employ both preventively and actually to the mitigation of her charge's pain; attentions which, if even they ever entered into a man-midwife's head, could not be accepted but with repugnance, I will not ſay only by a modeſt woman, but by any woman at all. And the truth is, that there can be few men in the world, but what, the more tender lovers they are of the women, but muſt be only the more diſguſted, the more impatient of the midwife's preparatory part of her office, which is however the moſt important one, both as to the prevention of pain, and to the ſafety of the delivery.

But even where thoſe preparatory offices have been omitted, or at beſt perfunctorily performed by a man-midwife, and where the actual function in the criſis of labor has been deficient, or at beſt indifferent, the labor may ſtill have proceeded, and the patient delivered with only more pain, than ſhe would probably have ſuffered under

under a good midwife's hands. What follows then? Why this; that the patient in the tranſport of joy at her delivery from pains which are hardly ever but great, even though much leſs than her fear had magnified them to her; inſtead of gratitude to that Nature, which can conſtitute to her only a vague object of the mind, her weak imagination gives to the aſſiſtent man-midwife, a more palpable being, as he is of fleſh and blood, the merit of a deliverance, in which he had moſt probably no other ſhare, than its being his fault that it was not yet leſs painful than ſhe has found it. But this is not at all. What ſounds towards a paradox, and yet is ſtrictly true, is, that the more pain the patient has endured, through the man-midwife's fault, the greater will her gratitude be to him. The reaſon is as obvious as it is natural. Herſelf not knowing, nor having perhaps any idea of what ought to have been done for her more perfect relief, ſhe will have no conception that the man has omitted any thing: ſhe will give him credit for what he has *appeared* to do for her; and meaſure her ſenſe of acknowledgement by the

the pain from which ſhe will ſuppoſe he has helped to rid her; and in her joy at her delivery would think it even an ingratitude to liſten to ſuggeſtions from others, or even from herſelf, that ſhould tend to diminiſh, explain away, or may be reduce to leſs than nothing, the benefit ſhe ſo vainly imagines was his work.

YET nothing is more true, nor indeed more likely to be true, than that beſides the natural pains of labor not having been obviated by a due preventive method of aſſuagement; beſides their having beeen unſkilfully attended to in the article of the delivery, through the natural unhandineſs of the men-midwives, it does not unrarely happen, that their defective practice, not only occaſions to the women much greater pains, but even much greater danger than would probably have been the caſe, I will not ſay if a midwife, but even if Nature had barely been left to herſelf, that is to ſay, if nature had been neither injured by a clumſy aukward attempt to help her, nor injudiciouſly interrupted, nor prematurely forced or cruelly hurried. The patient

tient is however delivered, and delivered ſo that, if ſhe was better informed, or leſs blinded with joy, inſtead if thanking the operator, to whom ſhe attributes her deliverance, ſhe would have to impute to him all the increaſe of pain ſhe had unneceſſarily ſuffered, all the increaſe of danger of which this man ſo thanked was himſelf the author. Then it is, that even in a ſubject ſo ſerious, a judicious by-ſtander might give himſelf the comedy of obſerving the airs of conſequence, which an operator aſſumes for a woman under his caſe *not* loſing the life, of which but for him ſhe would moſt probably *not* have been in the leaſt danger. Thus a man, whoſe all of merit well weighed, is no more than not having been able to conſummate the deſtruction of mother and child, in ſpite of the kindneſs of nature, ſhall for that negative merit be allowed the poſitive one of having performed wonders of art. Then it is that the mother naturally in a rapture of joy at her deliverance, in which ſhe never remembers but with a gratitude, of which ſhe only miſtakes the object, by paying to the operator, what in fact was

due

due to nature; then it is, I say, that the mother, father or parties concerned, for want of making due allowances in a point they are so excusable for not understanding, cordially join the self-applause of the man-midwife. Nor does it unfrequently happen, that one of these instrumentarians, after an operation, for which he deserves the severest censure, and of which, whatever necessity he had to plead was originally owing to his own unskilfulness or omission, shall strut about the room, and flourishing his butcher's *steel*, sing an *Io Peean* to himself, "*for that his victorious art had* "*saved nature as it were by enchantment*" *. Then it is, that in full chorus the deluded parties, in the innocence of their heads and hearts, hold up their hands to heaven, and piously exclaim, "*what a narrow escape* "*the patient had, thanks to the learned Dr.* "*and what a mercy it was she had not been* "*trusted to such an ignorant creature as a* "*midwife must be.*"

* Levret's words, p. 279.

THIS folly has even ſometimes gone ſo far, that when a woman has, through a man-midwife's miſ-practice, ſuffered perhaps a wrong, ſo deep as to be diſqualified for ever after for being a mother, or had a fine child, literally ſpeaking, murdered (*ſecundum artem* indeed) he has, what with ſcientific jargon, through the cloud of which it was impoſſible for perſons unverſed in the matter to diſcern the truth, what with an air of importance, and what with eſpecially her own weak prepoſſeſſion in favor of the ſuperiority of men to women-practitioners, known how to impoſe on her the moſt atrocious injury for ſo great a ſervice as that of ſaving life is for ever held. The deceived patient then thinks ſhe cannot thank him too much, nor reward him ſufficiently for what he could be ſcarce puniſhed enough, if proportionably to the miſchief he had done; and to which his miſ-repreſentations have perhaps even made herſelf innocently an accomplice;

THIS indeed is eaſily to be accounted for. A pregnant woman muſt eſpecially, in the moment of her labor-pains, think herſelf

herſelf too much in the power of the operator, to whom ſhe has truſted herſelf, to diſpute his judgment. She may even, and that is probably oftenеſt the caſe, have too good an opinion of it, to diſpute it. Her labor is ſevere, and, as before obſerved, ſevere, or at leaſt the more ſo, very likely from ſome fault of his. Her deliverance lingers; Nature, from ſome vice of conformation, or defect of art in her aſſiſtent, appears faint, remiſs, inſufficient, in ſhort, in her expulſive efforts; in the mean time, the pains of the patient grow more and more intenſe and intolerable: the man-midwife, either perplexed or impatient, or not knowing what better to do, has recourſe to thoſe fatal inſtruments, with which the odds are ſo great, that he will gall, bruiſe, or irreparably wound the child, or the mother *. In

* *It is among the ſmaller miſchiefs done to the mother, that I here mention my having not unfrequently ſeen ruptures brought on by the practice of men-midwives, upon patients in other lyings-in, precedently to the one in which I attended them. Theſe ruptures I have ſometimes been able to remedy by good management in my laying them.*

ſome

In ſome caſes indeed, he may take the dreadful advantage of the mother's agonies of pain, to uſe thoſe inſtruments, and do her a miſchief ſhe may not juſt then feel, from the pain of the operation being abſorbed in the greater one; to uſe them, I ſay, unobſerved by her *.

But where the exigency appears yet greater, where, in ſhort, the operator imagines, as he too often imagines ſuch an extremity where it does not exiſt, as that either the mother or the child muſt periſh, it is his maxim, and certainly a very juſt one, to conſider the mother's ſafety, as the preferable object. Of this preference then he makes a merit, ſo much the more acceptable to the mother for her own ſelf-preſervation being ſo palpably concerned, and ſo much the leſs diſputable for her not knowing but he may be in the right, as to the reality of the fatal dilemma. In ſuch a doubt, if nature takes the part of

* "Let the *forceps* be unlocked, and the blade *cautiouſly* diſpoſed under the cloaths, ſo as not to be *diſcovered*". Smellie, p. 272.

the child's life, which is at ſtake in the deciſion, ſhe alſo much more ſtrongly and reaſonably takes the part of the mother's own exiſtence in the mother's own breaſt. She cannot then deny the premiſſes, of which ſhe is no judge, when the inference is not only in favor of her life, but even a very juſt one upon the admiſſion of thoſe premiſſes. The temptation alſo of a quick riddance from a violent ſtate of pain, is too great a temptation for a weak woman, overpowered with her actual feelings in that rack of nature, to reſiſt: ſhe acquieſces then, or perhaps her huſband, her friends, equally ignorant with herſelf of the truth of things, and duly ſimpathizing with her in her impatience of her longer ſuffering, even virtuouſly, even piouſly acquieſce in the recourſe to theſe inſtruments, which are ſo ſure of deſtroying the child, and hardly ever fail of doing the mother great and ſometimes irreparable miſchief.

When then the child has been deſtroyed, the mother damaged; in ſatisfaction for all this tragic-work, what have you but

but perhaps the learned Doctor's assertion, "* *that if this force had not been used, the "mother must have been lost as well as the "child.*"

Now granting what is the utmost that candor can be expected to grant, that in but the doubt of the mother's life, it is right to sacrifice the life of the child to that doubt, and much more to the certainty of the mother's life not to be otherwise saved, than by these fatal instruments, I beg and entreat all fathers and mothers, or who are likely to be so, to consider with themselves whether,

In the first place, an experienced midwife is not more likely to prevent such an extremity by previous management, proper anticipations, and actual handiness during the labor-pains, than the aukward man-practitioner (as most of them evidently are) who must, naturally speaking, be so much her inferior in those points of her art, which conduce essentially to the

* See Smellie, p. 307.

ſmoothing the way for, and effectuating a delivery; and from the defect of which points that neceſſity which, is pleaded of a recourſe to inſtruments, originally takes its riſe. So that in fact they who are the authors of the danger, pretend to remove it, and how? by an evil only inferior to death itſelf, from which however thoſe are not always ſafe, to whoſe ſafety ſo much is ſacrificed in vain.

In the next place, it may well be recommended to conſideration, whether, as the *common methods* * confeſſedly allowed

* Smellie, p, 291. "When the head preſents, "and *cannot* be delivered by the labor-pains; when all "the *common methods* have been uſed without ſucceſs, "the woman being exhauſted, and all her efforts vain; "and when the child cannot be delivered without ſuch "*force* as will *endanger* the *life* of the *mother*, becauſe "the head is too large, or the *pelvis* too narrow: it "then becomes abſolutely neceſſary to open the head, "and extract with the hand, forceps, or crotchet. "Indeed this laſt method formerly was the *common* "practice when the child could not be *eaſily* turned, "and is ſtill in uſe with *thoſe* who do not know how "to ſave the child by delivery with the *forceps:* for "this reaſon their chief care and ſtudy was to diſtin-"guiſh,

lowed by the men-midwives to be the *preferable* ones, ſince the recourſe to inſtruments is not even by them *allowed*, until the *common methods* are exhauſted, there is not great reaſon, without breach of charity, to imagine that the natural unfitneſs of the men for the *common methods* does not determine eſpecially the common men-midwives to an over-haſty recourſe to the *extraordinary* ones, and make them ſee very *dangerous ſymptoms*, where they are no better than phantoms of their own creation; ſo that by their eagerneſs to embrace them for an excuſe, they loſe to the patient that benefit of patience in general, which Dr. Smellie himſelf allows in a

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"guiſh," whether the *Fætus* was dead or alive; and as "the *ſigns* were *uncertain*, the operation was often de- "layed until the woman was in the moſt imminent "danger; or when it was performed ſooner, the opera- "tor was frequently accuſed with *raſhneſs*, on the ſup- "poſition that the child *might* in time have been deli- "vered *alive* by the *labor-pains*: perhaps he was ſome- "times conſcious to himſelf, of the *juſtice* of this *im- "putation*, although what he had done was with an *up- "right* intention."—This laſt indeed would be too uncharitable not to grant.

particular caſe *. To which patience the midwives are ſo much more inclined than the men, as indeed they may well be, ſince, ſhould that even be exhauſted, they have no inſtruments to fly to for the abridgment of a labor: and where they underſtand their buſineſs, not only every thing is beſt done without them, but the want of them is prevented.

But beſides the common motive of impatience in the men-practitioners for re-

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* Smellie, p. 255. "In this caſe, we find, *by* expe- "rience, that, unleſs the woman has ſome VERY DAN- "GEROUS SYMPTOM, the head will in time ſlide *gra-* "*dually* down into the *pelvis*, even when it is too *large* "to be *extracted* with the *fillet* or *forceps*, and the "child be SAFELY delivered by the *labor-pains*, al- "though *ſlow* and *lingering*, and the mother ſeems *weak* "and *exhauſted*, provided ſhe be ſupported with nou- "riſhing and ſtrengthening cordials." Now in this Dr. Smellie is very right; his wrong conſiſts in not making this concluſion more extenſive, as that of his fellow-practitioners too often does, in fancying or exagerating *dangerous ſymptoms:* whereas for once that nature really occaſions them, they are incomparably oftener the effects of the operator's own miſ-practice: this obſervation I cannot, for the truth and importance of it, too often repeat.

ſorting

ſorting to that dangerous expedient of making ſhort work, of which the women are unhappily incapable *, or at leaſt which the good artiſts among them hold in the contempt and deteſtation it deſerves; are there no other motives from which recourſe may be had to the inſtruments? I have hinted at ſome: but as the matter is of infinite importance, from the uſe made of theſe inſtruments, in introducing men into the practice of an art ſo appropriated to the women, it cannot but be of ſervice even to the public, to diſcuſs the juſtice at leaſt of ſome of thoſe hints, and examine whether there is any farther foundation for my fears, that the precipitancy of the men in their reſorting to inſtruments, or to the prematurely forcing a delivery, to

* In honor to truth, be it here noted, that a few, and very few indeed of the midwives, dazzled with that vogue into which the inſtruments brought the men, to the ſupplanting themſelves, attempted to employ them, and though certainly they could handle them at leaſt as dextrouſly as the men, they ſoon diſcover'd that they were at once inſignificant and dangerous ſubſtitutes to their own hands, with which they were ſure of conducting their operations both more ſafely, more effectually, and with leſs pain to the patient.

the utmoſt danger if both mother and child, whether, in ſhort, the pretence of extremities may not, in ſome caſes, have even other cauſes, than a natural incapacity for the *common method*, an ignorance of better practice, or their impatience.

I HAVE before remarked what I here repeat, and repeat it without the leaſt apprehenſion of being juſtly taxed with breach of charity, that a mere ſordid view of lucre, of ſupplementing, in ſhort, deficiencies of ſucceſs in other profeſſions, was originally the foundation in this country of that novel ſect of men-midwives, which we have in our days ſeen ſo much multiplied. If any can imagine that the inſtrumentarians, with their crotchets, their forceps, and the reſt of their iron or ſteel apparatus, had more in view the relief of the diſtreſſed females, from the dangers to them in the ignorance of the midwives, than they had their own intereſt, in the ſtepping into the place of thoſe they ſo injuriouſly decried; if any, I ſay, can believe that ſheer humanity, and not ſordid gain, was their view, I can only pity

pity a credulity, that muſt proceed more from a goodneſs of the heart, than of the head. But to whoever will deign to conſult his own reaſon, exerciſed upon facts and the nature of things, may eaſily ſatisfy himſelf, that intereſt, and intereſt only, inſpired and actuated theſe intruders into a province ſo little made for them, of which there can hardly be a ſtronger preſumption than the very recommendation of inſtruments, of which not one of them but muſt know the perniciouſneſs, though they make it the capital handle of the introduction of themſelves. Not one of them but rails at them, and uſes them. Now, as I may ſafely take it for granted, that intereſt is at the bottom of this innovation, where that ſame intereſt is the principle, it will hardly be denied me, that it is generally ſpeaking the leading or the governing one. It is rarely contented with acting a ſecond part. It often exacts ſacrifices, but is rarely itſelf one. All the actions and procedure of its votaries take the tincture of it. Humanity and all the virtuous or tender paſſions are either totally excluded, or exiſt with little or no efficacy in a heart enſlaved by intereſt.

In

In virtue of this reaſoning, and I ſhould be much more glad of finding myſelf miſtaken (knowingly I am ſure I am not ſo) than that it ſhould be but too much verified by matter of fact, I ſhall here ſubmit a caſe to the reader for his own deciſion on the probability, and I dare ſwear, that among the female readers eſpecially, I may chance to have, there will be more than one, who, on her own perſonal experience, could atteſt the exiſtence of ſuch a caſe, or at leaſt has the ſtrongeſt grounds of preſumption of it.

A WOMAN then, lingering in a ſevere labor, and urged by her pains naturally to wiſh the ſpeedieſt end of them, is yet by another ſuperior prompterſhip of nature deſirous of meriting the ſweet name of mother, and is inclined of herſelf not to think it over-purchaſed by a little more patience. In this criſis, much muſt depend on the judgment, and conſequently on the advice of the aſſiſtent practitioner, male or female. If a midwife, beſides the tenderneſs conſtitutional to her ſex, her natural

fears

fears for the mother eſpecially, not without a due ſhare of concern for the child, where there is a poſſibility of ſaving it without too great a riſk to the parent, beſides the ſuperior execution of her art in points of the manual function, ſhe is moreover bound in all duty to ſee one labor come to its iſſue before ſhe undertakes another; for the ſake of which, ſhe cannot well, if ſhe would, without inſtruments, prematurely force a delivery by ſuch violent, dangerous and ſo often deſtructive means, She will then in courſe encourage and inſpirit her charge with patience, and uſe all the blandiſhments, ſoothing methods imaginable to comfort, relieve, and ſtrengthen the reſolution and ſpirit of the lying-in-woman. Now, a man-midwife, *well paid*, will perhaps in that cold unaffectionate manner, with which a duty that has no foundation but in intereſt is ever performed, exhort to endurance that patient whom his dexterity is inſufficient to relieve, that patient whoſe pains are perhaps for the greateſt part his own fault. But ſhould he, during ſome lingering labor, be called elſewhere, to a more rich employer,

or

or ſhould one from whom he has greater expectations, require an attendance from him incompatible with his duty to his prior employer, is not here a temptation to make a quick diſpatch with his inſtruments? A temptation to which it is at leaſt doubtful whether a man, actuated by intereſt, may not be over-inclined to yield. It may even byaſs him, without his perceiving it himſelf. A man's determining motive, when it is not of a very juſtifiable nature, is often ſkreened even from himſelf by a more ſpecious one. Such, in the preſent caſe, is the ſaving the mother, oftenеſt by deſtroying, and ſometimes by only galling, bruizing, or maiming the child, when the mother rarely eſcapes her ſhare of the ſuffering. How many mothers have pathetically interceded, and interceded in vain, for a reſpite of execution, when the operator has in a peremptory tone cut ſhort their inſtances, by telling them in a magiſterial way, that he knew beſt what to do, and could not anſwer for the patient's life, if the operation was longer delayed! What reply has a poor woman, weak by nature, oppreſſed by pain, and ſubdued by

by her prepoſſeſſion to oppoſe to ſuch an argument of neceſſity, of which her own life appears to be the favored object? What huſband, what friends, but muſt unheſitatingly ſubſcribe to ſo juſt a preference as that of the mother and the child? Not that I would inſinuate here, that ſuch a dilemma does not ſometimes though certainly very rarely exiſt: but is it not to be feared, that it is too often rather lightly taken for granted that it does exiſt? May it not be preſumed, that the inſtruments are brought oftener into uſe than is neceſſary, for the ſake of a diſpatch, of which the child is almoſt ever the victim, and not unfeldom the mother herſelf, who is always hurt, and ſometimes irreparably damaged? May it not be juſtly ſuſpected, that the abuſes of Art have occaſioned to many women an appearance of barrenneſs, from the reality of which kinder Nature had in fact exempted them?

But as if ignorance, inability, impatience, intereſtedneſs, were not all of them ſufficient motives for the forcing uſe of theſe inſtruments, Dr. Smellie has unmeaningly

ingly added another, which alone muſt, to the greateſt number of the men-practitioners, prove a greater excitement than all the others put together, if it be true, that Vanity has ſo great a predominancy over the human heart as it is generally imagined to have. But let us firſt quote him: the inference will follow.

" (P. 265.) *at any rate, as* women *are* " *commonly* frightened *at the very* name *of* " *an* inſtrument, *it is adviſeable to* conceal " *them as much as poſſible,* untill (mind pray " that UNTILL) *the* character *of the* ope- " rator *is* eſtabliſhed."

(P. 273.) " *Though the* forceps *are co-* " *vered with leather, and* appear *ſo* ſimple " *and* innocent, *I have given directions for* " concealing *them, that* young practitioners " BEFORE *their* characters *are* fully eſta- " bliſhed, *may avoid the calumnies* and *miſ-* " *repreſentations of thoſe people who are apt* " *to prejudice the ignorant and weak-minded* " *againſt the uſe of any inſtrument, though* " *never ſo neceſſary, in this profeſſion; and* " *who taking the advantage of unforeſeen ac-* " *cidents*

" *cidents which may afterwards happen to the*
" *patient, charge the whole misfortune to the*
" INNOCENT OPERATOR."

HERE I appeal to every reader of common-ſenſe, to every reader who knows any thing of the human heart, whether it can be imagined that any man-midwife, who is called in to the aid of a lying-in woman, will chooſe to appear in the character of a *young practitioner*, or of ſuch an one, as that his *character* is not enough *eſtabliſhed* to *dare* to uſe inſtruments, for fear of after-reflexions. Is not there, if but in this leſſon of the Doctor's, couched a ſtrong temptation for a man-practitioner not indeed to produce openly and barefacedly his apparatus of inſtruments, but to be very uncautions of concealing them? Since the reaſon for concealing them, that of the women being apt to be frightened at them, ſtands coupled with another reaſon, the fitteſt in the world to work a contrary effect to both; by piquing the vanity of the operator to ſuffer them to be ſeen, and what is worſe yet, to the uſing them only that they might be *ſeen*, eſpecially if to this motive of oſtentation you add, that if

theſe

theſe inſtruments being the very *grand* and *capital* point of their imaginary *ſuperiority* to the women-practitioners; over whom every occaſion of uſing them ſeems to the men a kind of triumph.

BUT while it is to the novices in the art, that Dr. Smellie recommends more eſpecially the concealment of theſe ſame terrifying inſtruments, the good Dr. does not ſeem aware, that an advice much more honeſt and humane might be given to the women, for whoſe *benefit* the inſtruments are ſuppoſed to be invented, which is, not to employ *young practitioners* or novices, not in ſhort to employ thoſe whoſe character was not *fully* eſtabliſhed, ſince they might, in order to paſs for adepts, or at leaſt for no novices, be too apt to embrace occaſions of floriſhing thoſe ſame inſtruments with leſs neceſſity, if poſſible, than the *great men* themſelves of the profeſſion.

IN the mean time, this curious injunction to the *young* practitioners, while the *old* ones are by that diſtinction implicitly allowed more openneſs in uſing the inſtruments, reminds

reminds me of the caution of the Regent-duke of Orleans, who taking monſieur de St. Albin *, a natural ſon of his, that was in prieſt's orders, to taſk, for ſome irregularities, of which certain biſhops had complained, ſaid to him in their preſence, "*Sirrah, could not you ſtay till you were a "biſhop?*"

But whatever may be the motives of recourſe to inſtruments, and there are other poſſible ones which I have omitted, certain it is, that in this nation they are more frequently employed than even in France, where that pernicious faſhion firſt took birth. And yet in this very nation it is, that the men-practitioners themſelves own, that the leſs they are uſed the better. Now will they, to ſolve this contradiction of their practice to their doctrine, plead that the labors of the women here are, in general, more difficult than they are in France? Common ſenſe and truth will however furniſh a juſter ſolution: men-midwives are more employed *here* than in

* At this day archbiſhop of Cambray.

France, where the women-practitioners are ſtill reſpected, and leſs driven out of practice, conſequently inſtruments are leſs frequently uſed. For I will not pay the men-operators of this country ſo ill a compliment, as to excuſe them, by ſaying they are leſs dexterous at the manual function than thoſe of France, and therefore the more obliged to have recourſe to thoſe inſtruments, of which they themſelves have ſo ill an opinion, though indeed not a ſo thoroughly bad one as they deſerve.

In the mean while they may well proceed triumphing in their career, notwithſtanding all the fatal trips they make in it, while, if they did not even run it in the dark, they have ſo much learned duſt ready to throw into the peoples eyes whom it is ſo much their intereſt to blind. No wonder then, that ſince, in the more ſevere caſes, in the preternatural labors, they ſo often receive from well-meaning employers both pay and thanks for the greateſt miſchiefs, owing to their errors both of omiſſion and commiſſion, they ſhould, in the leſs difficult, and which are by much the

the moſt frequent ones, where no tragic accidents have happened, have credit given them for a merit, to which their pretentions are ſo little examined. For this they are indebted to the overflow of a gratitude at a loſs for a living object and from an impatience of doubt miſtaking that object ſo groſly, as well as to that ſame prepoſſeſſion's continuing, from which they were preſeably employed. Hence it is, that one might often hear women, who had not even ſuffered a little by their practice, from the want of knowing, that by their practice it was they did not ſuffer leſs, very ſincerely ſay, "*Dr. ſuch an one attended me in my lying-in* —— *He delivered me very* "*well.*" —— Or, "*I have been lain for* "*four or more children by a man-midwife,* "*and never had room to complain.*" All which proves no more than what may very well have happened, that Nature has been too favorable to them, for even the untoward aſſiſtence of a man, in the office of a midwife, entirely to fruſtrate her beneficence. I do not here add the weight that *faſhion* throws into the ſcale of prejudice, reſerving to treat of that ſeparately.

But to that concluſion in favor of the men-midwives, from the ſuppoſed ſuperiority of their ſucceſs to that of the women-practitioners, contained in the objection I am now anſwering, I have further to oppoſe an argument drawn from *matter of fact*, to which I ſhould imagine it difficult to find a ſatisfactory reply. This argument then conſiſts in a fair appeal to Experience herſelf.

I have before obſerved, that in the Hôtel-Dieu at Paris, there are no men-practitioners ſuffered, for I do not include the ſurgeon-major, who is abſolutely no more than an officer for the form-ſake. Conſequently there are no inſtruments ever employed in the delivery of the women admitted to that hoſpital. It is true they are extremely well taken care of; all neceſſaries are found them by that noble charity; but yet it cannot be thought, that the ſame abundance of eaſe and conveniences can be afforded, as by thoſe perſons, generally ſpeaking, who employ men-midwives. This diſtinction I mention for the

ſake

ſake of the allowance juſtly to be made in the calculate I am about to propoſe. Notwithſtanding however the ſuperiority in this point on the ſide of men-midwives practice, notwithſtanding the grief of mind from various cauſes, as well as the bad conſtitution of the bodies of many of thoſe indigent wretches, prior to the reception into that hoſpital, notwithſtanding other eaſily conceivable diſadvantages; notwithſtanding all theſe, I ſay, take any given number of patients, delivered purely by the midwives of that hoſpital, without the intervention of one man-practitioner, and eſpecially without inſtruments, and to that given number, oppoſe an equal one of women attended from the firſt of their labor to their delivery by the men-midwives, and ſee on the ſide of which ſex, in the operators, there will be found the greater number of thoſe who ſhall have done well, or ſuffered leaſt.

I AM the more emboldened to propoſe ſuch an experiment from my own certain knowledge. I have ſeen more than two thouſand women delivered under my eyes, at the Hôtel-Dieu at Paris, ſome of whoſe

caſes muſt be readily imagined to have been ſevere or preternatural ones. Yet all of them were delivered by our midwives and apprentices without the aid of a man-practitioner; nor an inſtrument ſo much as thought of. And in all this number I can ſafely aver, there were but four who died upon their lying-in; and that not from any fault of the midwife's art; but one from the complication of a dropſy, the other three, who were daughters to honeſt tradeſmen, ſunk under the ſhock of grief and ſhame at the being deſerted by the men who had brought them into that condition. They died, in ſhort, of their deſire to die. Yet the children all did well.

This is a fact that does not require the being believed upon my word. The known practice at that hoſpital, and the regiſters regularly kept, will atteſt the truth of this computation. And here, I appeal to every intelligent reader's own ſenſe, to his own knowledge of things, whether it is unfairly preſumed, that in the ſame number of two thouſand women, delivered by the men-practitioners, they could

could ſhow a roll ſo innocent, ſo free from fatal miſchief or damage to their patients, to mother and to child. Let any parents, or who may hope to be parents, or are concerned but for the intereſt of mankind in population, weigh but the force of this argument, purely drawn from a matter of fact, of which there can be ſo few who are not, in ſome meaſures, judges enough to decide upon their own knowledge, or at leaſt on ſtrong grounds of belief or conjecture. In ſuch a number as two thouſand women delivered by the men-operators, how many, by what I know, and by what many others muſt know as well as I, muſt have periſhed, or been torn, ruptured, grievouſly hurt, or irreparably damaged! How many innocent infants muſt have loſt their little lives, in proof of that ſuperiority of practice in the men to the women! Or rather, in proof of that infatuate credulity, which has prevailed in favour of an innovation ſo unauthorized by nature, by common ſenſe, or by experience!

OBJECTION the Thirteenth.

SAY what you will, the fashion will predominate. It is now the fashion to prefer men-practitioners of midwifery to midwives. You will oppose the torrent in vain.

ANSWER.

THE conclusion against me that I shall oppose the torrent in vain, is a very just one. As to myself, I ought to expect that I should oppose it in vain, if the decision of the public was to turn upon any thing of so little authority as my private opinion, especially in a point where it is so justly liable to the suspicion of its being byassed, both by private interest, and partiality to my own sex. I readily then grant that my own opinion should go for nothing. But what ought to go for a great deal is my reader's own judgment, formed upon his own reason and knowledge. But that is not all. I have some dependence on Nature and common sense recovering their rights, from this preference of the men-

midwives

midwives which ſhocks both, being, in truth, nothing more than a faſhion, not even of the growth of this country, but tranſplanted from a neighbouring one, whoſe follies are unhappily ſo contagious, though for the moſt part ſo deſpicable. How a few intereſted men, for want of buſineſs in their own profeſſions, tranſplanted this baneful exotic here, where it has met with ſuch undue cheriſhment has already been touched upon.

But then as this unnatural preference has all the folly and whim of faſhion in it, it may be hoped, that it will alſo have all the inſtability and tranſitorineſs of one. Time that confirms the dictates of Nature deſtroys the fictions of opinion. But in points where Nature is herſelf attacked or injured, inconveniencies and damages never fail of following thereon, enough to oppoſe the duration of them. The numbers of lying-in women (thanks to beneficent Nature) rather not deſtroyed than duly aſſiſted by the men-operators, can neither atone for thoſe who periſh, ſometimes the mother, ſometimes the child, ſometimes both, while

while none of them are but ſufferers in ſome degree; nor long blind a public, that has ſo much intereſt not to be impoſed upon in a matter ſo eſſential to it, by falſe pretences, or by an injurious and intereſted degradation of the midwives, who at the worſt can hardly be ſo bad as the very beſt of the men, in the capital point of their buſineſs, the manual function. The oftneſt greater *danger*, and always the greater *pain*, under men-operators than under the midwives hands will, ſooner or later, determine the parties concerned to open their eyes on their greateſt intereſt, in a point of ſuch infinite importance to them.

GRANTING then to Faſhion all the power it really has, and a greater one it is, than for the honor of human kind, can well be imagined, ſtill, it not only has its limits of extenſion, but duration. It is only for the truth of Nature to be univerſal and eternal.

FASHION, it is true, may not only govern people in indifferent matters, ſuch as dreſs, furniture, equipage, or ſo forth, but even

even in eſſential, even in capital ones, ſuch, for example, as is this point of option between the men-operators and the midwives: it may, in ſhort, exert its tyranny in many things, one would rather think left better to the determination of REASON. But then this tyranny cannot well be long-lived. The evils which ſuch a faſhion begets deſtroy at length their own parent. No opinion then, as I have before obſerved, can be permanent that is not founded on the truth of Nature: but where the conſequences of ſuch an opinion are detrimental to the good of ſociety, which is the darling object of Nature; that ſpirit of ſelf-preſervation which ſhe has ſo manifeſtly diffuſed thro' human kind, will hardly ſuffer errors pernicious to it long to ſubſiſt. There is no faſhion can, under ſuch objections, long hold out againſt victorious Nature, who is ſure to revenge the violences offered her.

AND here I even officiouſly ſeize on an occaſion that riſes to me out of the very bowels, I may ſay, of my ſubject, of ſelecting for one proof of the danger of adopting innovations offenſive to Nature, a point

point of ſuch near analogy to midwifery, as that of nurſing children, the care of whom, next to that of the mothers, is the true midwife's tender province.

I wiſh then that thoſe, who too readily admit that this ſo recent a faſhion of employing men-midwives preferable to female ones, is an improvement receivable on the foot of its ſuppoſed advantage to human kind, would conſider a little the actual conſequences of having flown in the face of Nature with reſpect to the bringing up young children, in a way ſcarce more foreign from her dictates, than that of *men* delivering *women*. That women are by Nature herſelf formed for the office of aiding women in their lying-in; that they are alſo formed to bring up children by the breaſt, are two parts of their deſtination by Nature, which in all ages, and in all countries ſeem to have born little or no controverſy. Intereſt has lately invaded both theſe provinces. With this difference, that as to the firſt, that of women ſupplanted in their buſineſs of delivering women, an active intereſt has prevailed;

as

as in that of denying the female breaſt to children, it is a purely paſſive one *; and we ſhall ſoon ſee what a dreadful effect this ſacrifice of Nature to intereſt has produced.

As to the miſchief produced by the other, of the implicitly excluding the women from midwifery, by the power of prejudice and faſhion, it is not, as yet, of a Nature for obvious reaſons quite ſo ſuſceptible of proof, though moſt certainly not the leſs therefore exiſtent. And that miſchief is palpably owing to the gain which the men-midwives find or preſume in the exerciſe of that profeſſion. This is the active intereſt: that end to which the

* By this intereſt, with reſpect to the miſ-government of the infants that fall upon the pariſh, I do not mean ſuch a perſonal intereſt, as that the ſuper-intendants of the charity put a ſingle farthing into their own private pockets, out of the ſavings, by the with-holding or grudging a proper proviſion for the children, but merely the intereſt of a pariſh, or the public, in ſo falſe and inhuman an article of parcimony. A conſideration which, if that were poſſible, renders it the more inexcuſable from the temptation being ſo much the leſs.

means

means give ſo juſtly the conſtruction of baſe and ſordid. The rich are the object of this wretched impoſition, which will probably laſt ſo much the longer, for the intereſt to be found in impoſing upon them.

But for the denying the female breaſt to children; it has not indeed paſſed hitherto into a tenet, that children may as well be reared by the ſpoon as by the breaſt, becauſe there is not that proſpect of the place of a *dry-nurſe* being as lucrative as that of a *man-midwife*. If it was ſo, I ſhould not diſpair of ſeeing a great he-fellow floriſhing a pap-ſpoon as well as a forceps, or of the public being enlightened by learned tracts and diſputations, ſtuffed full of Greek and Latin technical terms, to prove, that water-gruel or ſcotch-porridge was a much more healthy aliment for new-born infants than the milk of the female breaſt, and that is was ſafer for a man to dandle a baby than for an inſignificant woman.

As this unnatural treatment then of children is almoſt entirely as yet confined to

to the very poor, that is to ſay, to new-born babes thrown upon the public CHARITY for their SUSTENANCE, the rearing by the ſpoon is not yet regularly eſtabliſhed as a general *doctrine*, it is only admitted in PRACTICE! As *proper* wet-nurſes, from the difficulty in procuring them, might be *dearer* than dry ones; the *cheapeſt* method is preferred, and forms a kind of paſſive intereſt or ſaving œconomy.

BUT what are the conſequences of this violation of Nature, in the grudging her peculiarly appointed aliment to theſe poor little candidates for life? What follows the ſubſtituting, for cheapneſs-ſake, ſuch food as is meant to be afforded them, and is perhaps ſometimes even not given them? Death. Death with all that cruelty of torture that attends atrophy or inanition. Thus periſh theſe miſerable victims to the falſe opinion, that the courſe of Nature can be changed with impunity. I have ſaid here falſe opinion only, becauſe, with all the obduracy of heart that the ſpirit of intereſt ſo notoriouſly creates, with all the crimes it ſo often produces, I cannot think, that ſuch an horror, as the murder

of

of ſo many innocents, can be entirely imputed to intereſt without ignorance coming in for its ſhare, though intereſt has doubtleſs contributed to the ſo long continuance of it.

If that maxim is not a falſe one, that he who knowingly ſuffers an innocent perſon to periſh, and can help it, is actually guilty of murder: and I prefer here the term of guilty to that of acceſſary; becauſe I am told, that where there is guilt of murder, all are in the eye of equity and law, principals. Ignorance then, of the ſure murder of theſe innocents by their method of treatment, can be the only plea for thoſe to whom the national charity had committed the care of them. I ſhould think too, that even I myſelf ſinned againſt charity, if I did not believe, that there is none of thoſe truſtees of the poor children, that would not ſhudder at the thought, of himſelf taking an infant up by the leg and daſhing its brains out againſt the wall. And yet that would be balmy mercy, the diſpatch conſidered, compared to the lingering tortures, in which

which thoſe poor little creatures muſt expire, in the common way of pariſh-nurſing. What is certain however is, that Death would ſcarce more aſſuredly be the conſequence of the child's brains being at once beat out, than of that impropriety of aliment, which in the mildeſt conſtruction is owing to an error in opinion or belief, that any aliment could be ſalutarily ſubſtituted to the one dictated by Nature.

I HAVE here mentioned barely impropriety, or ſometimes negation of aliment, without allowance for other cauſes of deſtruction to thoſe infants, ſuch as cold, bad air, uncleanlineſs, neglect of due attendence, or deficiency, in ſhort, of requiſites, which are not to be expected from the very poorer ſort of the people, to whom the rearing of thoſe infants is generally committed. But that omiſſion of mine is neither undeſigned nor unfair. I preſume I ſhall have the greateſt phyſicians on my ſide, in averring, that even new-born babes are endowed with a ſurprizing hardineſs. Their little ſeemingly ſo delicate bodies bear cold to a degree ſcarcely credible, but

from the commonneſs of both obſervation and practice, that they only thrive the better for immerſions in cold water. Cleanlineſs, a good air, and attendence, have doubtleſs indeed ſome ſhare in the well-doing of children of that age: but all together are in no degree of compariſon to the importance of beſtowing on children their appropriate aliment. The phyſical diſquiſitions into the reaſon of this do not belong to me here: nor are a few inſtances of infants reared by the ſpoon any valid juſtification for breaking the general rule of Nature, aſſigning to the female breaſt the nutrition of children: of which too there is this ſalutary conſequence, that in the very act of lactation there is, by Nature, generated ſuch an indearment of the ſuckled child to the nurſe *, as that ſhe who began it perhaps only for hire, finds her-

* I have ſomewhere read, that brutes have not been inſenſible of this effect, on ſuckling animals, though even of ſo different a kind from their own, that the moſt mortal enmity naturally exiſted between them: ſuch was the inſtance, tranſmitted from Penſylvania, of a cat ſo ſoftened towards a rat, by having accidentally given ſuck to it amongſt its own kittens, that it forbore exerting towards it its uſual hoſtility to that ſpecies.

ſelf engaged by a growing affection to ſupply in ſome meaſure the place of the mother to the orphan or deſerted babe. The rearing by the ſpoon is ſo far from inſpiring any ſuch dearneſs, that the innocent infant is conſidered only as an imbarraſſment, of which the quicker the riddance, in the death of the *brat*, ſo much the better.

THE opinion, however, that this one of the greateſt inſtitutes of Nature for the preſervation of the ſpecies, for which ſhe has ſo admirably organized the female breaſt, could be diſpenſed with in favor of a moſt ſordid ſavingneſs, has alone cauſed more human ſacrifices, to that black Demon of INTEREST, than probably were ever made to the "grim idol of" Moloch in the valley of Hinnom, while the cries of the poor children could not be heard by ears cloſely ſtopped up in honor of that infernal ſpirit.

BUT if any reader ſhould imagine that I here invent any thing, or that, in favor of my inference of danger from the caſe

of revolting againſt the unalterable inſtitutes of Nature, I have exagerated matters, nothing will be more eaſy, nor probably at the ſame more ſhocking, than the procuring himſelf a proof of the ſcarce not actual murders I have mentioned.

THE pariſh-regiſters of this great metropolis are, I preſume, open for inſpection. There needs but to examine them, to diſcover the red-letter catalogue of the armies of innocents that have been put to death under the management of the charity deſtined to preſerve their life. There will be found not one but many, even of the moſt populous pariſhes, where for fourteen, twenty, or more years, not one poor babe of the thouſands taken in have eſcaped the general deſtruction, and ſacrifice to that inhuman fiend of Hell, *Intereſt*. Here with what propriety might Nature borrow from one of her moſt dutiful children and darling, the following exclamation,

——— ALL *my pretty ones?*
Did you ſay ALL! *what* ALL?

I can-

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I cannot but remember ſuch things were,
That were moſt PRECIOUS *to me:* did Heav'n look on,
And would not take their part? ACCURSED INTEREST,
They were all STRUCK for thee!

This is ſo rigidly true of ſome pariſhes, that if I am not miſinformed, the verification was not long ago made, as to one of them before a court of juſtice, of not a ſingle infant having been brought up in the term of fourteen years. And I could name another, in which, during the courſe of above twenty years, ALL, ALL the new-born children that fell under the adminiſtration of the Pariſh-CHARITY, periſhed, except one boy, of whom it is recorded as a prodigy, that he lived till he was five years of age, when he filled up the number, and died like the reſt. Will any one here ſay, that this TOTAL mortality was purely accidental?

BUT this can be no wonder to thoſe who know there is ſuch an expreſſion,

even proverbially in uſe, as that of children being a BURTHEN to the pariſh. An expreſſion of which it is hard to pronounce whether it is more execrable or more ſilly. But what is ſo inconſequential as the ſpirit, or rather the no-ſpirit of intereſt? Children may indeed be a burthen to private families; and yet for the ſweetneſs of it, how chearfully is it oftenеſt born, or with very few extraordinary exceptions to the general rule? But to a nation, or what is the ſame thing, to the lawful repreſentative of the nation, a pariſh, what can be on earth a falſer light to view children in, than that of a burthen? What could be ſo intolerable in the ſum to be added to that actually paid for their being worſe than murdered out of hand, to ſave their little lives, and bring them up to that age, in which the national wiſdom ſhould have eſtabliſhed for them, at once, the means of earning their likelihood, and of earning it with ſuch beneficial retribution to their truly mother-country, as ſhould amply reward her for her not having neglected the duties of humanity towards them? All the good, all the ſenſible part of mankind allow, that the true riches of a ſtate, are

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in the numerouſneſs of it ſubjects. Trade, arts, the navy, the militia, our colonies all open inexhauſtible channels of employment and maintenance. And yet there are who can call children, thoſe children too of the public, not in a ludicrous, but in the deareſt tendereſt ſenſe, ſince in the public they ought to find that office of a parent, of which the guilt, the inability, the want of nature in their natural relations, or their death may have defrauded them; there are, I ſay, who can call ſuch children a *burthen!* We complain of the defect of population, and yet have ſeen intereſt creative of obduracy, and perpetuating ignorance and error, manifeſtly thinning the ſpecies, by nipping thoſe tender bloſſoms of human kind.

HERE, if this notice of the treatment of children ſhould even appear a digreſſion, I ſhould, in favor of the intention, hope forgiveneſs from a humane reader. He would ſcarce impute it to me as matter for criticiſm, the having ſacrificed propriety to the introduction of a point ſo important to humanity. But the truth is, that neither as a digreſſion, nor as a falſe or

overſtrained argument, nor as a miſapplication, can the ſame well be conſidered, by any who will withal conſider its ſtrict affinity in ſo many points to the ſubject of which I am treating.

It will readily appear, that both theſe violences offered to Nature in the ſubſtituting the men-midwives to the females, and dry-nurſes to wet-ones, acknowledge exactly the ſame common parent, intereſt, and have exactly the ſame common effect, the deſtruction of infants. Is it then poſſible to be too much on one's guard againſt thoſe ſo flagrant impoſitions, which are the offspring of that proof-hardened paſſion? Is any thing ſacred from it, ſince the lives of innocents palpably have not been ſo, in one branch of practice, nor very preſumably are one jot more reſpected in the other? It is true indeed, that the practice of employing dry-nurſes has not yet aſcended much among the great and rich; firſt, becauſe faſhions rarely do aſcend from the lower claſſes of life, and next, becauſe there is no ſuch temptation of actual lucre to defend or ſpread it: but as to that of preferring men-midwives, nothing

nothing is ſo likely as its deſcending, as it is ſo much the nature of faſhion to deſcend, and none are more readily adopted by the lower ranks of people from the higher ones, than thoſe faſhions which are the moſt fooliſh and the moſt pernicious. And certainly this is not the one that the leaſt deſerves thoſe epithets.

WAS it not for this influence of the faſhion, in making the moſt unreaſonable as well as the moſt dangerous things paſs into practice from the higheſt down to the loweſt life, many an honeſt man might eſcape the bad conſequences of his following the example of thoſe, than whom none are ſo liable to be impoſed on in ſuch matters, the great and the opulent. Theſe make it worth the while of intereſted perſons to deceive them, and thus often for being cheated, pay with their money, their health, and even with their lives. In the mean time, many who are ſeduced by the vogue in which they ſee the men-midwives, employ them on a principle which cannot be enough commended, their natural affection to their wives and children,

children. The reaſoning which occurs to a huſband in middling or low life on this occaſion is probably as follows. "My "wife and child are full as dear to me as "thoſe of the greateſt man in the king-"dom are to him, and ſhall I grudge a "little more expence in the proviſion for "their greater *ſafety?*" So far he reaſons right: all his miſtake lies in taking too readily for granted, that ſame *greater ſafety*, to be on the ſide of the men-practitioners in preference to the midwives, becauſe the former are employed by the great, who, by the by, conſult Nature the leaſt of any claſs of life, even in points of their own health. And certainly in many reſpects to that *ſine-quo-non* of human happineſs, the great had better follow the example even of the poor, than the poor theirs. Make the moſt then of your reaſoning from the prevalence of faſhion, the gout and the men-midwives, well conſidered, are no very enviable appendixes of high-life.

If in ſome that laudable tenderneſs for mother and child, is the determining conſi-

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deration for employing a man-midwife by whom Nature, if consulted, would assure all concerned, that the safety of both was more likely to be endangered than not, there are others again, in whom calling in the aid of a man-midwife is rather matter of luxury, of parade or ostentation, than of opinion of superior safety. These are of that imitative kind of beings, with whom the preference of a man-practitioner for the conducting of his wife's lying-in, turns upon no other motive, than what would equally make them bestow a silk gown of a new fashion, or a laced-head upon her; from a spirit of emulation of some neighbour or superior.

But what is more surprising yet, is that notwithstanding the kind of loathing and repugnance with which Nature inspires the women to receive such an office from a man, as that of delivering them, a repugnance to which they had so much better listen, since it has all the characters of a salutary instinct; there are women so weak, as not only not to represent to their husbands the expedience of examining, at least, the propriety of such a fashion, before

fore they blindly adopt it on the faith either of others liable to be deceived, or of thoſe intereſted in the deceiving them; but who even, in a ridiculous complaiſance to that faſhion, of which themſelves and children are not unlikely to be the victims, will make a point of being attended by a man-midwife, by way of a piece of ſtate.

I HAVE myſelf known women ſo infected by this ſilly vanity, that on receiving viſits from their friends after lying-in, and being delivered by a woman, with the utmoſt ſafety and ſatisfaction to them, have been aſhamed of having had the better ſenſe and regard for themſelves, to employ a midwife in defiance of the faſhion, and have told their friends, that it is true Mrs. —— had lain them, but that there was a Doctor at hand in the next room. This by the by was falſe, for ſuch a *Led-Doctor* is neither needed nor employed, where a midwife that knows her buſineſs is called. If any occaſion for medical or even chirurgical ſkill ariſes from the complication of a caſe, there is always time to have the advice of a regular phyſician,

or

or a regular ſurgeon, becauſe that complication can never eſcape timely notice. It can only then be, for the ſake of his iron and ſteel inſtruments, that a man-midwife has ſo much as the pretext of being neceſſary, and I hope to prove, that all the needful can be much better done without them. Yes, I repeat it, better done without them.

For here and throughout the reader will pleaſe to obſerve, that it is on the ſuperiority of ſafety in employing midwives that I impugn the growing faſhion of a recourſe to men-practitioners. It is the ſide of Nature I take againſt a ſet of mean mercenaries, who commit the cruelleſt outrages upon her, under the falſeſt of all pretences in them, that of aſſiſting her. I would not be ſo criminal as to wiſh the benefit of a falſe argument, in a point of life and death to thoſe mothers and children, my tender care, even could I be ſilly enough to imagine, that I could paſs ſuch an one upon my reader. I wave therefore all plea of the novelty of this upſtart profeſſion of men-midwives. Such a plea I readily

I readily confeſs is not receivable. Were it ſo, how many valuable diſcoveries or improvements muſt have been ſtifled in their birth, if the objection to their being novelties was a valid one? All that I would contend for is, that an innovation ſhould not be admitted only becauſe it is an innovation; and that the deciſion of a matter of ſuch capital importance, is better left to Reaſon, always herſelf ſubmiſſive to Nature, than abandoned to Faſhion, which ſo often acknowledges no other juriſdiction than that of whim or humor.

THERE is no preſcription for error, no ſanction in cuſtom againſt improvements. But certainly in ſuch a capital point as the life of ſo many human creatures, in ſhort, in one of the moſt ſacred objects of government, that of population, ſuch a novelty as that of bringing men-midwives into general practice, requires rather a greater authority than that of Faſhion, while there is ſuch a ſtandard of eſſay as Reaſon.

INOCULATION was not long ſince a novelty in this nation. The lady who introduced it, for any thing I know to the contrary, ſtill lives to enjoy the honor of having procured ſo great a benefit to mankind. But then this benefit would bear the faireſt of all trials, that of calculation: for what is reaſon itſelf but another word for calculation? The procuring then the ſmall-pox by inoculation, in a body duly prepared, and eſpecially at an eligible age, affords, according to the doctrine of chances, ſo much a fairer proſpect of ſafety, than in the caſe of a ſpontaneous or accidental infection, that nothing ſcarcely could be imagined more friendly to Nature than ſuch a rational prevention of her danger, from a diſtemper too rarely eſcaped, for the poſſibility of that eſcape to be employed as an argument againſt ſuch a method of prevention. Here then the ſeeming violence offered to Nature, appeals for its juſtification to Nature, Reaſon and Experience.

CONSULT Nature as to this innovation in the employing men-practitioners preferably

ably to the midwives, who have been for ages, and ſo univerſally conſidered as the propereſt for that function. Nature will tell you, that it is injuring her to ſuſpect her of being ſo cruel a mother-in-law, as to deny her tendereſt production the female ſex ſufficient ſuccors within herſelf, or leave women under a neceſſity of recurring to men for aid in their greateſt need of it, during thoſe ſufferings, to which it has pleaſed the great maſter of Nature to ſubject peculiarly the women. If Nature then is but another name for his Fiat through all his works, never was his will more plainly ſignified than by her voice in this point: a repugnance in both ſexes to that office being adminiſtered by a man. A repugnance which is not even one of Nature's leaſt remarkable ſigns of abborrence from this innovation, and is only to be ſurmounted in the men by intereſt, and in the women by their falſe fear, or what is weaker yet, by their rage in following that bell-weather Faſhion, though it ſhould lead them like ſheep to the ſlaughter. The uncouthneſs and inaptitude of the men, ſo ill compenſated by their miſerable inventions of iron and ſteel inſtruments, form another

another loud proteſt of Nature againſt this important function being committed to men-operators.

CONSULT reaſon, and reaſon founded upon thoſe dictates of Nature, to which time only gives the more ſtrength, will tell you, in contempt of faſhion, that the men-midwives will never do any thing in a matter rather too univerſal for any excellence in it to depend upon Greek, Latin, or Arabic; that they are, in ſhort, only hatching of wind-eggs, in the ſtudy of an art, which no incubation on it will ever ſufficiently naturalize to them.

IF to experience you appeal, I have already furniſhed unrefutable arguments of that's being againſt the men-midwives. But let them remember my confeſſion, that the number which I have quoted of women happily delivered is taken from the courſe of practice of good midwives. I am not here an advocate for bad ones, nor would I wiſh to authorize them if I could. All that I ſhall ſay, and dare aver is, that the very worſt of them, unleſs their hands are cut off, or at leaſt deſerve to be cut

off, can hardly be worſe than the beſt of the men-operators.

But while it is to the tribunal of Nature, of Reaſon, and of Experience, that I preſume to wiſh that this ſame Faſhion might be brought; I readily acknowledge its force though not its juſtice. I feel the power of it, with pain, for the ſake of humanity *! My oppoſition then to this faſhion is rather founded in duty than in hope. The weakneſs of it will probably furniſh

* The candid reader will pleaſe to obſerve, that in giving up ſo much as I do of the argument from the prevalence of faſhion, I do not give up a little: ſince I might juſtly oppoſe to it the inſtances of our Royal Family, in which we ſee ſo many happily living and floriſhing monuments of the midwive's capacity. *Accoucheurs* had, I preſume, no *hand* in delivering the greateſt Lady in this kingdom. The men-midwives will perhaps treat this as trifling. But what will they ſay to ſo victorious a proof in favor of the female-practitioners, as that taken from themſelves, who, for the moſt part, were obliged to the midwives for their uſhering them into that world, of which they are ſo much the light and ornament; and out of which world they are rather not ſo gratefully employed in driving thoſe, by whoſe function they were helped into it?

faſhion

fashion only a new matter of triumph, not indeed over me who am too low for it, but over the welfare of mankind, which it has often, in more points than this, the pleasure to see sacrificed to it, though in not one perhaps more palpably than in this one.

In the mean time it might be worth the while of even those who not being themselves men-midwives, nor having any personal interest in patronizing them, owe their favorable notion of them to their own fair judgment; it would, I say, even be worth their while to consider that there may possibly be a time, when they may themselves see reason to change that judgment of theirs. They may possibly discover the illusions of interest, under the old stale mask of service to the public. They may find out the folly of fashion. But will not it be too late, when that fury of fashion shall, like a pestilence, have either swept away the good midwives, or at least have so thinned their numbers, as not to leave enough for the demand of the service? They must in time become, to all intents and purposes, like an old obsolete law, as

effectually abolished by disuse, as if abrogated by a formal repeal. "The matter "would not be much if they were," an instrumentarian will probably say, but I doubt much, whatever he might gain by it, whether mankind or population would profit much by that extermination, even though the men-midwives with their tire-têtes, crotchets, and forceps, were to succeed to their business.

And that such an extermination is far from improbable, will appear no strained inference to those who consider the power of Fashion, which establishes its tyranny, much as the first Roman emperors did theirs over that commonwealth, by leaving a semblance of liberty without the substance; whence the baneful effects do not the less follow, or rather the more surely follow. Thus there is indeed as yet no act of parliament for the preference of men-practitioners or the extinction of the midwives, but the statutes of fashion are not only more forcible than any act of a human legislature, but, in this matter even than the laws of Nature herself tho' inculcating their observance, under pain of death, or

or at the leaſt of ſevere corporal puniſhment; ſuch as being torn with cold pinchers, or cut or punctured with inſtruments, or put to more pain than neceſſary.

ALREADY has faſhion driven numbers of women out of their livelihood to make way for the encroachments of the men on the female provinces of induſtry, though there never was a time, in which it was not a juſt complaint that there were rather much too few means of employment for women. Faſhion has determined it otherwiſe, and many callings formerly appropriated to females are now exerciſed by men.

BUT as to this profeſſion of midwifery, even the total extinction of the real midwives, would not be perhaps ſo bad as giving that name to thoſe poor creatures in training under the men-practitioners, who independently of their own incapacity of practice, conſequently of forming good practitioners, have a palpable intereſt not to ſuffer their women-pupils to gain any eminence in the profeſſion that might give

umbrage to themſelves *. The midwives whom theſe men-practitioners would perhaps gratiouſly allow to ſubſiſt, might to their own inſufficiency add the dangerous circumſtance of creating, or at leaſt of

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* Pray remark the following directions for the *choice* of a midwife, from Dr. Smellie, p. 448.

" She (the midwife) ought to *avoid* ALL *reflections* " upon *men-practitioners*, and when ſhe finds herſelf " *at a loſs*, candidly have recourſe to their aſſiſtence: " on the other hand, this *confidence* ought to be *encou-* " *raged* by the *men*, who, when called, inſtead of o- " penly condemning her method of practice (even " though it ſhould be *erroneous*) ought to make allow- " ance for the weakneſs of the ſex, and rectify what " is amiſs, without expoſing her miſtakes. This con- " duct will as effectually conduce to the welfare of " the patient, and operate as a ſilent rebuke upon the " conviction of the midwife, who, finding herſelf " treated ſo tenderly, will be more *apt* to *call* neceſ- " ſary aſſiſtence on future occaſions, and to conſider " the ACCOUCHEUR as a MAN OF HONOR and a REAL " FRIEND. Theſe gentle methods will prevent that " calumny, which too often prevail among the male " and female practitioners; and redound to the AD- " VANTAGE of both: for no ACCOUCHEUR is ſo " *perfect*, but that he may err ſometimes, and on ſuch " occaſions he muſt expect to meet with retaliations " from thoſe midwives whom he may have roughly " uſed."

not

not preventing, by duly exerting themſelves in the pre-diſpoſing part, the neceſſity of calling in their protectors, eſpecially where recommended by them. Not that I imagine even theſe mock-midwives would wilfully be guilty of ſuch prevarication in their duty. For them not to deſerve ſuch a ſuſpicion, it is enough that they are women, conſequently tender-hearted. But that does not exclude the idea of weakneſs. But where ſo fair a virtue as gratitude may diſguiſe even from themſelves the fouler motive of intereſt lurking at bottom, if that tenderneſs is not even deſtroyed, it may not impoſſibly be made a tool of, and join in perſuading them, that things had really better be left to the men-practitioners, whoſe creatures and devotees they are. Thence a negligence ſuperadded to their defect of ſkill. Such ſubalterns then would, at leaſt, not be diſ-inclined to the "FINDING" *themſelves* "AT A LOSS", or yet worſe for the patient, have by their omiſſions, if not commiſſions, bred the occaſion of "*finding*" themſelves "*at that loſs*", even mechanically, and without the direct deſign of paying their court to their recommending "*accoucheur, their man of honor*

and *real friend*," in a *candid* recourſe to him. Pity it were indeed that ſo charming a harmony ſhould not ſubſiſt between *the accoucheurs* and ſuch *midwives*, for the "MUTUAL ADVANTAGE" of both! A harmony, which however could hardly be eſtabliſhed but at the expence of the ſacrificed patients.

AND here I appeal to the reader's own fair judgment, whether I over-ſtrain the conſequence againſt ſuch wretched creatures as they cannot but be who muſt, for bread, be ſo ſubſervient to the men-midwives, and be what the French call, their *ames damnées* (ſouls ſold). Can any thing be more probable than that theſe *good women* dignified by the men-practitioners, out of their ſpecial grace and favor with the title of midwives, will on all occaſion conſult the "*advantage*" of their kind *patrons* and "*real friends*". And how can that advantage be better conſulted than by bungling their work ſo as to make it *appear* neceſſary to have a *candid recourſe* to the good Doctor, who recommended and warranted them? can it, in ſhort, be imagined

gined, that they will be leſs mere machines than Dr. Smellie's Dolls, or indeed furniſh leſs occaſion, than the education under thoſe Dolls, for the *iron* and *ſteel inſtruments*, which are the moſt part underſtood to be indiſpenſably neceſſary where the midwife ſhall have failed. And as to ſuch midwives as have been formed or recommended by the men-practitioners, their *not* failing would indeed be the wonder!

THUS the name of a midwife may ſubſiſt after the reality ſhall have periſhed, and the world ſo often deceived by mere names, may not perhaps diſcover this annihilation till long after it is effectuated, or till it is too late to repair the damages, which will hardly fail of diſcovering it to them. Of good midwives there never were too many; but they are now much too few; though ſtill not more rare in proportion than thoſe of the men-midwives, who may be called good, comparatively to ſo many of them as are dangerouſly ſuperficial. Diſcouragement has already greatly hindered the places of the good female-practitioners who are gone off the ſtage, from being

being duly ſupplied. Proper ſubjects decline taking up a profeſſion, in which they muſt have to dread the prevalence of ſo falſe a prejudice againſt them, as that which determines the perference of the male-operators. It is eaſier to deſtroy, than to create a-new; and perhaps when the need of good midwives ſhall be at the greateſt, the difficulty of finding ſuch, will make the employing of men-practitioners, with all the ſo juſt objections to them, even a neceſſity. Things are not at perſent perhaps far from that point, and an alarming conſideration that would be to all women, if they were but to reflect on the increaſe of pain and danger to themſelves in the hours already too big with both, of their increaſe, I ſay, by the moſt aukward and violent aid of the men, compared to the ſo much more effectual and gentle methods ſo natural to the women-aſſiſtents.

If the parties then principally concerned in the deciſion of this queſtion, and eſpecially the women who are the patients, and their tender relations of huſband, father, or brother, &c. were but to conſult

their

their own feelings, their reaſon, and even that inſtinct which, in this point, is itſelf ſo ſtrong a reaſon from its being the voice of Nature never unhearkened to with impunity, they would ſoon, to your objection drawn from a faſhion ſcarce leſs ridiculous than pernicious, allow no more weight than, in fact, it deſerves.

Objection the Fourteenth.

You muſt allow, however, that it muſt be a falſe modeſty that, in the women, which can oppoſe the preference of the men-practitioners to the female ones.

ANSWER.

I know indeed that Dr. Smellie (page 2. of his introduction) attributes the oppoſition made by the Athenian women * to the

* As the ſtory is told in Hyginus, it ſhould ſeem that the practice of midwifery at Athens, was, on a ſeaſon interdicted to the women, who, by a fixt reſolution to die rather than ſubmit to be delivered by the men, procured from the Areopagus the repeal of that ſtatute, and the

the prohibition of midwives, and to the acceptance of men-practitioners in their room to "*miſtaken modeſty.*" It may however with more reaſon and truth be averred, that the admittence of men to that function by women, would be in the women

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the ſaving from imminent condemnation one Agnodice, who had dreſſed herſelf in mens cloaths, to elude the cognizance of the law. The great practice ſhe had obtained by this means had alarmed the phyſicians, who thereon accuſed her as a ſeducer of the women: againſt which ſhe eaſily defended herſelf by a declaration of her ſex. But this brought her under the penalty of the law againſt women exerciſing the midwife's profeſſion. The ſtory imperfectly related in Hyginus, at the ſame time that it does honor to the modeſty of the Athenian women, that is to ſay, if modeſty is not, according to the men-midwives, a falſe honor, gives room to ſuſpect, that the midwives themſelves had perhaps occaſioned the promulgation of ſo abſurd a law. It is well known, than in thoſe antient times, there were for female diſorders women-phyſicians in form. Perhaps their encroachments on the province of the men, by exerciſing the art of phyſic in general, might make a reſtraint neceſſary, which was only ſo far faulty as that the remedy was in this, as it often is in other caſes, carried into extremes. I would no more juſtify the women overſtepping their proper ſphere of employment into that of the men, than I would the men ſinking into that of women. They are both reprehenſible, both dangerous, but aſſuredly, the laſt muſt be the moſt ridiculous.

a moſt

a moſt egregiouſly MISTAKEN IMMODESTY. Since, ſurely the virtue or grace of female modeſty is not an object to be held ſo cheap, as to be ſacrificed for worſe than nothing, for nothing better, in ſhort, than the purchace with it of danger or perdition to both the mother and child. After ſo valuable a ſacrifice as that of modeſty itſelf, it may perhaps ſound mean to add any thing comparatively, ſo trifling as that of the hire not given to the perſon who proſtitutes herſelf in ſome ſort on a ſo much miſtaken hope, but to the very perſon to whom ſhe is proſtituted in that hope of ſuperior ſafety.

I AM not then here to aſſume a character, that would become me ſo ill, of a Caſuiſt or Divine, by pretending to fix the degree of moral turpitude in the ſubmiſſion of modeſt women to a practice, which, I will even allow might be juſtified by the ſuperior conſideration of ſafety to two lives, if that conſideration was not a queſtion moſt impudently begged, with ſo little foundation, that the very contrary thereof is the truth.

NEI-

NEITHER would I here incur the juſt charge of impertinence, in giving my private and inſignificant opinion on an undecency ſo unwarranted by any neceſſity. That would look too like dictating to others, what they are to think of a practice, of which every one will doubtleſs judge for himſelf. The boundaries of female modeſty are ſo well known, and ſo aſcertained by common conſent, that ſurely it little belongs to me to offer new lights upon that ſubject.

WHAT I have then to ſay, on this head, is purely in juſtification of that modeſty, which the men-midwives are for obvious reaſons pleaſed to call a falſe one, though ſo far as it pleads for excluding them, it is an ingratitude to that Nature, of which it is the peculiar gift to the female ſex, not to term it even a wiſe virtue.

SOCIETY eſpecially ſtands indebted to Nature for her ſuggeſtion of modeſty in this point. If in all ages, in all civilized coun-

countries, the wife is conſidered as the peculiar property of a huſband, inſomuch, that all laws human and divine conſecrate, if I may uſe the expreſſion, to him alone, excluſive of all other men, the acceſs to the reſerved parts of the wife's body, certainly ſuch a privilege can hardly be thought lightly communicable. And what can be more ſo than ſuffering a man, mercenarily or wantonly, or perhaps both, to invade that ſo ſacred property, under the maſk of a ſervice, for which he is by Nature ſo evidently diſqualified? While Nature too has made ſo ample a proviſion for this very ſervice, in fitting the women for it, with ſo much more propriety and ſafety, both to the concern of the public in the welfare of population, as well as to the domeſtic honor of families, which is not without ſome danger, at leaſt, from the practice of midwifery being in the hands of men.

As to this laſt averment of mine, the truth of it is ſo glaring, that it does not even need Dr. Smellie's own implicit confeſſion of it, in his inſtructions to the men-practitioners in general, or, if you pleaſe, to his more than nine hundred pupils.

" *H*

" *He* (*the* ACCOUCHEUR) *ought to* ACT " *and* SPEAK *with the utmoſt* DELICACY " *of* DECORUM, *and* NEVER VIOLATE " *the* TRUST *repoſed in him, ſo as to har-* " *bour the leaſt* IMMORAL *or* INDECENT " *deſign; but demean himſelf in all reſpects* " *ſuitable to the* DIGNITY *of his* PRO- " FESSION," p. 447.

HERE I confeſs myſelf ſo ſmitten with the propriety and ſanctity of the precept of the good Doctor's, and particularly with the needfulneſs of it, that I would adviſe every man-practitioner of midwifery, of a certain age that might require it, to have the ſaid commandment wrote out in *gold letters*, and wear it about his arm, eſpecially on his proceeding to *officiate*, by way of amulet, phylactery or preſervative againſt any incident temptation to *violate* his *truſt*, or to fall off from the high *dignity* of his profeſſion. All that I fear is, that its virtue may not always be to be depended upon, againſt the energy planted by nature in the difference of the ſexes. No one would be farther than I from the cruel

cruel injuſtice of drawing conſequences unfavorable to any ſet of men, from the miſconduct of any particular individual in it. * Errors are purely perſonal. If I then ſo much as mention the caſe of a man-midwife convicted of having debauched a gentleman's wife, in conſequence of his admiſſion to the practice of his profeſſion of midwifery upon her, it is by no means neither with a deſign to inſult the unhappy criminals, nor to draw from thence an inference to the diſfavor of the men-practitioners in this point, beyond what I am authorized by the conſtancy of the temptation from Nature, to all, yes, to all, who, by their age, in one ſex, are not paſt it: I ſay in one ſex, becauſe in the other, the female, the very circum-

* It is from this principle, that, with ſo fair a field for raillery, often not the leaſt forcible of arguments, I have, againſt thoſe who are ſuch advocates for the uſe of *anatomy* in *midwifery*, abſtained from laying any ſtreſs on the famous impoſition of the Rabbet-woman of Godalmin, upon profeſſors of anatomy. I am ſo far from attacking anatomy, that I aver, every good midwife ought to know *enough* of it to aſſiſt her practice. This would not however conſtitute her an anatomiſt, nor is it requiſite that ſhe ſhould be one.

ſtances of a woman's needing a midwife, ſhews that ſhe is not paſt the age of, at leaſt, cauſing a temptation. Further, it would even be a matter of argument on the ſide of the men-midwives, that ſo *few* inſtances come to the knowledge of the public, of the ill-conſequence of a practice which breaks down the capital barriers of modeſty; if thoſe ill-conſequences were not, in the nature of them, not only a ſecret, but eaſy to be kept ſecret. Who would complain but the huſband or relations of tranſactions between a man-midwife and his patient? But then how ſeldom need a third to be let into ſuch a ſecret?

I WOULD not then have the men-midwives to be too forward to treat the modeſty of the women on this head as a falſe one, or their ſcruples as a weakneſs. Modeſty in this caſe is not only the ſafeguard of the lives of themſelves and children, but of their own honor, which if it does not receive an actual fall in ſuch a ſubjection to a man-midwife, had perhaps better not be ſo unneceſſarily riſked ſo near the brink of the precipice.

I AM

I AM not writing here for Italians or Spaniards, or any of the inhabitants of thoſe countries who are ſo prone to jealouſy, perhaps becauſe they know their women. I am now addreſſing myſelf to Engliſhmen, not jealous, becauſe, if they know theirs, they muſt know that, in proportion to the number, no women on the earth have more of the reality of virtue and modeſty. I will not ſuppoſe then any thing ſo offenſive, as that the chaſtity of the generality of them is not infinitely ſuperior to the advantages or overtures for deſign afforded the men admitted to ſuch a privacy, as that of attending them in their lying-in and delivering them. But would the honeſteſt woman, or one however ſure of herſelf or of her virtue, think it eligible, without a full ſatifactory proof of that ſuperior ſafety, which is her object in preferring men-midwives, to be herſelf the occaſion of temptation to thoſe people? How can ſhe anſwer that ſhe will not be it? In that ſo formidable army of mercenaries, actually continuing to form itſelf under the banners of Faſhion, and headed by Intereſt, can ſhe

anſwer that the inſenſible ſtoics of it, will fall to her ſhare? Would a woman, I will not ſay, of ſtrict principles of honor, but barely of not the moſt abandoned ones, ſubmit herſelf in the manner ſhe muſt to a man-midwife, on her employing him, if ſhe would but ſatisfy herſelf, as ſhe eaſily may, that his aid cannot be more effectual than that of a woman? But what! if it is moſt undoubtedly a leſs ſafe one?

But this is far from all to be objected on the head of modeſty to this practice. The opportunities, if not of temptation, if not of ſeduction by it, at leaſt of offenſiveneſs to female reſerve are ſuch, as would make even a huſband, the leaſt ſuſceptible of jealouſy, ſo uneaſy for the outrages to which the employing of a man-midwife in the courſe of his wife's pregnancy and delivery might expoſe her, as would make him think it no indifferent point for his judgment to ſettle whether ſuch outrages might not better be ſpared her. It will not I preſume be denied, that all female modeſty is a flower, the delicacy of which cannot be too much guarded againſt any tendency to blaſt

blaſt it, and that nothing can threaten more that effect, than ſuch infringements of the unity of a huſband's privilege in the ſole uncommunicable poſſeſſion of his wife's body, as are implied in the courſe of a man-midwife's attendance. An unity of privilege, which, when broke in one point, does not always ſtop at that, but may proceed to farther breach, where there is art on one ſide, and weakneſs on the other. Many women are doubtleſs proof againſt the ſlipperineſs of ſuch an overture: but all have not alike ſtrength of mind.

But leſt I ſhould be here taxed with forging of phantoms merely for the honor of combating them, I ſhall only entreat all parties concerned to conſider the following ſo probable circumſtance, and then let them decide as their own judgment will direct them: a circumſtance taken (can any thing be fairer?) even from a man-midwife's own ſtating, as well as from the nature of things, of which none need be ignorant that will think at all about them.

It is then to be obſerved, that during a woman's pregnancy, and before the labor-

pains come on, one of the principal points of midwifery is, what is called the art of *Touching*. Thence are derived the ſureſt prognoſtics for preparation, and eſpecially from the ſigns it affords of rectitude or obliquity of the Uterus. I have already offered reaſons needleſs to repeat, why the men can never arrive at the excellence of ſkill in the women in this particular. But as to the importance of this faculty of *Touching*, hear what Dr. Smellie himſelf ſays.

P. 180. " The deſign of *touching* is to " be informed, whether the woman is or " is not with child; to know how far " ſhe is advanced in her pregnancy; if ſhe " is in danger of a miſcarriage; if the *os* " *uteri* be dilated; and in time of labor " to form a right judgment of the caſe, " from the opening of the *os internum*, " and the preſſing down of the membranes " with their waters, and laſtly, to diſtin- " guiſh what part of the child is pre- " ſented."

Again, P. 448. ſpeaking of a *midwife*, he ſays, " ſhe ought to be well ſkilled in " the

" the art of *touching* pregnant women,
" and know in what manner the womb
" ſtretches, together with the ſituation of
" all the abdominal VISCERA: ſhe ought
" to be perfectly miſtreſs of the ART of
" EXAMINATION in the time of labour".

HERE you have from an unſuſpected authority a certainly not over-rated importance of the expedience of preliminary TOUCHING. Now granting, only for argument's ſake, what is aſſuredly falſe, that a man-practitioner can be equal (ſuperior he would not in this point, at leaſt, have the impudence to pretend himſelf) to a midwife; let a huſband, let a wife, but reflect on the difference, every thing elſe being equal, there muſt be as to *modeſty*, between the function of *touching* being performed by a man or by a woman. Let a huſband, I ſay, for an inſtant figure to himſelf what a figure he muſt make, what a figure his wife muſt make, under ſuch a ceremony performed by a luſty HE-MIDWIFE, exploring thoſe arcana of the female fabric, and eſpecially to ſo little purpoſe, with his natural diſqualifications for

ſo much as knowing what he is about. Will the huſband be preſent? What muſt be the wife's confuſion during ſo nauſeous and ſo groſs a ſcene? Will he *modeſtly* withdraw while his wife is ſo *ſerved?* What muſt be his wife's danger from one of thoſe rummagers, if ſhe ſhould be handſome enough to deſerve his attention, or a compliment from him on ſuch a viſitation of her ſecret charms, the more flattering from *him*, not only as he muſt be ſuppoſed ſo good a judge from the frequency of his occaſions of compariſon, but as it muſt imply a ſuperior corporal merit in the woman ſo viſited, as could overcome that ſatiety which a faſtidious plenty of patients might ſo naturally be imagined to create in a man-midwife? Will any one ſay, that theſe ſuppoſitions are over-ſtrained, or out of Nature? I fancy, that if the ſecret hiſtories of many families were ranſacked, of the practice on which the men-midwives were in poſſeſſion, it would not be always found, that thoſe preliminary viſitations were not turned to ſome account of intereſt or ſeduction. And yet an omiſſion of that *touching* might be dangerous. How kind is it then in Nature,

to

to have of herſelf ſo far conſulted the good and tranquility of ſociety, in palpably beſtowing upon women a faculty, which ſhe has as palpably refuſed to the men, in whom the exerciſe of it would for obvious reaſons be big with ſo many inconveniences? Is there any breach of charity in the taking for granted the exiſtence of ſuch inconveniences, unleſs indeed, all of a ſudden, in favor of this lucre-begotten ſect, the men were ceaſed to be men, and the women women?

But allowing that nothing was to paſs between a man-midwife and his patient, in this *act* of *touching*, beyond the neceſſity of the practice, or in a merely technical ſenſe, that in ſhort no ſuch libertine impreſſion ſhould make itſelf be felt in the courſe of ſuch *touches*, as ſhould diſcompoſe the good *Doctor*'s DIGNITY, and endanger the patient's honor, by preſent or future attempts derived from ſuch a ſtrange privity; is it not to be feared, that a deſigning or intereſted perſon may take other advantages beſides that of gratifying ſenſuality? May not a woman, the more attached ſhe is to her

her modeſty, the greater ſacrifice ſhe has made of it, in her innocence of intention, only imagine herſelf but the more ſubjected to a man, to whom ſhe has ſubmitted in the manner ſhe muſt do to a man-midwife, and let him take an aſcendant over her and her family, of which a midwife would not ſo much as dream, from her office being ſo much in courſe, and too little extraordinary for her to have any extraordinary pretentions or deſigns? On the contrary, a man-midwife need ſcarce ſet any bounds to his. In any differences in a family, eſpecially between man and wife, muſt not a man-practitioner, from ſuch a familiarity with the wife's perſon, have ſuch a footing in the confidence of the wife, as may enable him to diſpoſe of her will almoſt in any thing? He may be her apothecary, phyſician, ſurgeon, privy-councellor, what not? What can a woman refuſe a man, to whom ſhe is ſo deluded as to think ſhe owes her own life, or that of a darling child, all his merit, in which I have before explained? What can a woman in ſhort refuſe a man, to whom nothing of that has been refuſed, in which conſiſt all the preliminaries of granting every thing? She may

may indeed refuſe him the ſacrifice of her virtue, if he ſhould think it worth deſigning upon, but how few things elſe could ſhe refuſe him? Once more the greater value ſhe put on the ſacrifice of ſo much of her modeſty, the leſs would ſhe be able to deny him any thing elſe, as any thing elſe muſt comparatively appear ſo inconſiderable.

But hitherto I have ſpoke only of thoſe outrages and dangers to modeſty from the preparatory attendance of the man-midwife as occaſion may require, during the pregnancy. But as to his officiating in the criſis of the labor-pains and delivery, there are two very eſſential points of conſideration.

The first. The modeſty of the women, unaccuſtomed to the approaches of other men than a huſband, muſt be in great ſufferance in the moments of their labor-pains. All Nature agonizes in them. They are at once weakened in the fleſh and in the ſpirit. The bare preſence of a man to officiate at ſuch a time, may excite in them a re-

a revolution capable of ſtopping the labor-pains cauſed by the expulſive efforts of delivery, which thus becomes dangerouſly retarded, and may ſo overpower them, as to put them in the greateſt peril of their lives. This is what has often happened. You may ſee frequent examples of this revolt of Nature againſt the miniſtry of men-midwives in Dr. La Motte himſelf, a man-midwife. If Nature then ſuffers ſo much in women at that juncture, when a perſon, nay even of the ſame ſex, offers her aid, in certain indiſpenſable occaſions, to which humanity is ſubjected; how greatly muſt the preſence of a man increaſe their conſtraint and embarraſſment, and rob them ſtill more of that ſo neceſſary freedom in the animal functions! But how greatly ought the women to thank that their inſtinctive repugnance of Nature to ſuch a proſtitution of their perſons, if they conſider thoſe tortures, which, by the liſtening to that ſame repugnance, may at once be ſaved to their modeſty, and to their perſonal feeling. Let them paint themſelves the following poſture preſcribed by a man-midwife. " *The patient muſt be commodi-*

" *ouſly*

" *ously placed, that is to say, on the bed-side,*
" *her thighs raised and expanded, her feet*
" *drawn up to her posteriors, and kept steady*
" *in that posture by some trusty helpers.*" *
Levret, p. 161. *On the use of the new crooked forceps.* Here it may be said; " why
" there is nothing in this attitude, however
" shockingly indecent, but what may be
" sanctified by the extremities of necessity".
Very well. But what must a husband, what must a wife think at her being *spread out* in this manner, under the hands and eyes of a man-practitioner, with his helpers, perhaps his trusty apprentices, only for the experiment of a *forceps* of a new invention, the merit of which too is a so contested an one, that Levret himself is forced to own that, " that same FORCEPS
" *would be* † *an instrument of pure* SPECULATION,

* " Il faut d'abord placer convenablement la ma-
" lade, c'est-à-dire, sur le bord de son lit; les cuisses
" elevées et ecartées, les pieds rapprochés des fesses, et
" maintenus en cette situation par des aides dont on
" soit sur." *Levret*, UTILITE DU NOUVEAU FORCEPS COURBE, p. 161.

† " Si on s'arrêtoit au precepte general, le *forceps*
" seroit un instrument de pure speculation et non de
" pratique." Lev. p. 161.

" LATION, *and not of* PRACTICE, IF " (N. B. that IF) *a certain general pre-* " *cept ſhould be true*," which, by the by, is moſt certainly ſo! So that, in this caſe, for example, you ſee how a woman may be treated, only to aſcertain the merit of ſome new-fangled gimcrack of an inſtrument. But to how many occaſions of as little, or even leſs neceſſity than this, for putting a woman into poſtures of this ſort, might not wantonneſs, intereſt, or other motives give birth? Or can pretexts for ſuch inſults to modeſty be wanting to deſigningneſs?

THE SECOND conſideration is this. Thoſe moments of weakneſs of ſpirit, and infirmity to which the labor-pains ſubject the women may, in ſome of naturally the weakeſt of them be, liable to leave impreſſions in favor of a man-midwife, the leſs ſuſpected of harm, and conſequently the more dangerous for their being ſuggeſted by that gratitude for his imaginary * contribu-

* The term *imaginary* is here far from an unjuſt one, and why ſhould not the honor of a deliverance, effectu-

tribution to their deliverance, which is itself a virtue, though the object of it is so miserably mistaken by them. Let any one image to himself what must often happen in Nature, a woman sinking under her pains, her mind all softened and overpowered with her present feelings, and looking up for *relief* to the *man*, employed, as she imagines, to procure it her, though the real fact often-

teneſt

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effectuated by Nature, be as well given to a being of flesh and blood as to a stone? The virtue of the *ætites*, or Eagle-stone, has currently passed for abridging the pains of labor, and accelerating purturition. A French consul in Egypt, ordered one of those stones to be tied to his wife's thigh, who was in a lingering labor. The stone in this case, more innocent than probably a man-midwife would have been, who would have used means to hurry the birth, or perhaps have gone to work with his *forceps* at least, suffered Nature quietly to go her own pace. What was the consequence? The lady was soon after happily delivered, which there is no doubt but she would equally have been if a brick-bat had been tied to her thigh. But Nature lost the thanks so justly due to her: the stone ran away with all her merit; and this case was added to the catalogue of the miraculous operations of the stone. In how many cases might it be said, that the stone here represents the man-midwife, if to the stone it was not so much more innocent and less dangerous to have a recourse?

teneſt is, that he will not have enough prevented her pain, or perhaps greatly occaſioned its increaſe. Of this however ſhe knowing nothing, ſees him in the amiable light of her deliverer from her actual and intolerable ſtate of pain. In the mean time, thoſe aukward uncouth endeavours of his to relieve and deliver her, even though they ſhould aggravate her torture, paſs upon her for maſter-pieces of art or ſkill. "Who "would be without a man-midwife?" At length, Nature ſometimes, even in ſpite of all his omiſſions, or bungled operation, proceeds in her favorite taſk of delivery, that is to ſay, if he has not hurried or made tragic work of it, with his miſ-practice or his inſtruments. The patient then is rid of her burthen, and what are then her feelings? Thoſe of exquiſite delight, from the compariſon with what ſhe was induring but the inſtant before. It is a tranſport of joy, not unmingled with gratitude, to the perſon to whom ſhe fancies herſelf in any meaſure obliged for it. The ugliеſt wretch on earth, ſo he could but be imagined the cauſe of ſuch a delivery, would, in thoſe inſtants, aſſume in her eyes the form of Lovelineſs itſelf. Even with the greateſt innocence

innocence of heart ſhe could hug, ſhe could kiſs him in the ebullitions of her joy and gratitude. Let no one imagine theſe expreſſions are over-ſtrained. Such a rapture of felicity, in the ſudden caſe of being taken as it were down from a rack, is not of a Nature to know any bounds of moderation, nor can be conceived but by thoſe who have felt it. Her gratitude would even extend to inaminate things, much more to the dear Doctor, to whom ſhe conceives ſhe owes ſo much. She eyes him with all the intenſe eagerneſs of a gratitude ſo fond, that its tranſiency into a paſſion of another nature would not appear ſuch a prodigy, to thoſe who conſider how apt paſſions of tenderneſs are to confound motives and run into one another. The melting-ſoftneſs of thoſe moments of infirmity and weakneſs of ſpirit, affords a ſuſceptibility of impreſſions, which may not afterwards be ſo ſoon worn out, and of which the uſual affection from the difference of ſexes, in the parties, may ſooner or later come in for its ſhare. Dr. Smellie has, as I have before obſerved, implicity allowed the poſſibility of a temptation to men, and ſhall I not fol-

low his laudable example of candor, and confeſs that there may alſo be weak women?

It is indeed true that in caſes of extremities, ſuch as moſt certainly are not the frequenteſt ones, any thought of immodeſty may be intirely out of the queſtion. The ſad and ſuffering ſtate of a woman agonizing with pain, at the gates one may ſay of death, leaves little room for licentious temptations. But, once more, thoſe caſes are much the rareſt: and even in thoſe, the greater the danger will have been, the greater muſt the gratitude afterwards be for the imaginary ſervice, that will be ſuppoſed to have accompliſhed the deliverance. Let a midwife have really rendered that ſervice, the gratitude will ſcarce be ſo quick, ſo lively or ſo laſting, only becauſe ſhe is not a man.

If it ſhall be here objected, that the men-midwives ought to be above all ſuſpicion or ſcandal of this ſort; I ſhall only ſay, that at leaſt it is their intereſt to appear ſo. But they themſelves will not pretend to an exemption from temptation, nor can anſwer for

for themſelves that ſuch a temptation may not come into exiſtence, as that all their virtue, fortified by the divine precept before quoted from Dr. Smellie, may not defend them from yeilding to it. They are not, or at leaſt ought not to be men in years for obvious reaſons as to that manual practice of theirs which at the beſt is ſo indifferent. Let any one then conſider the conſequence of this worſe than unneceſſarily putting young women, in ſuch manner, into the hands of men in the vigor of their age. Let any impartial perſon but reflect what barriers are thrown down, what a door is opened to licentiouſneſs, by the admiſſion of this ſo perfectly needleſs innovation. Think of an army, if but of barely Dr. Smellie's nine-hundred pnpils, conſtantly recruiting with the pupils of thoſe pupils, let looſe againſt the female ſex, and of what an havock they may make of both its ſafety and modeſty, to ſay nothing of the detriment to population, in the deſtruction of infants, and I preſume, it will not appear intirely in me a ſuggeſtion of private intereſt to wiſh things, in this point, reſtored to the old courſe of practice of this art of midwifery by women. A courſe which Na-

ture has so self-evidently established, in her tender regard to the female sex, and to its darling offspring, and in which she has not less consulted one of her primary ends, the Good of Society, in the greater security of the conjugal union and property, which ought to be so sacred, and especially so, for the honor of the human understanding, from the invasion of an upstart profession, forbidly mean in its motives, infamously false in its pretences, shamefully ridiculous in its practice, and yet dreadfully serious in all its consequences.

Conclusion of the First Part.

In the foregoing part of this work I have contented myself with asserting, in general, the perfect inutility of those instruments, of which the male-practitioners themselves confess the danger, and use them not a bit the less for that confession. It is then for the following and second part, that I have reserved the entering into a more particular discussion of them. Therein will appear, upon how false and slender a foundation the gentlemen-mid-

wives

wives have inſinuated themſelves into a buſineſs ſo little made for them. The truth is, that the pernicious quackery of thoſe ſame inſtruments has been artfully made the pretext, and become the ſanction of an innovation ſet on foot by Intereſt, adopted by Credulity, and at length foſtered by Faſhion. The employing of midwives was undoubtedly not long ſince, in this country, the General Rule. The calling in of men-practitioners, upon very extraordinary occaſions, was an Exception, and a very rare one, to that General Rule. But by a fatal inverſion of the natural order of things, the Exception is recently crept into the place of the General Rule. The point is to conſider, whether this palpable violence to Nature is of that benefit to ſociety which it is pretended to be.

I HAVE already examined ſome of the arguments in favor of the men-practitioners. But the principal one, deduced from the incapacity, or rather averſion of the midwives, upon juſt grounds, from uſing

inſtruments, merits an ampler ſcrutiny. In proof of my candor in it, I ſhall take moſt of my remarks on thoſe inſtruments from what the men-practitioners themſelves ſay, and confeſs of them. This, I preſume, connot be deemed unfair.

Upon the whole, thoſe parties whom the deciſion may concern, will pleaſe to decide on which ſide the force of Reaſon and Truth ſhall appear the greateſt; and ſo deciding, it is, in fact, in their own favor, and in one of their moſt capital concerns, that they will decide.

They will decide, in ſhort, whether, upon the whole, the plea of the men-practitioners, founded upon the ignorance of a few midwives which, bad as it is, is more than ballanced by their incompetency in the manual function, and to which a remedy might eaſily be found, is a valid one for driving out of the practice of midwifery a ſex, to which the faculty of it is ſelf-evidently the genuine gift of Nature herſelf, only to make way for a ſet of intereſted

eſted male-practitioners, whoſe ſo boaſted art is oftenest ſignalized by the moſt barbarous and horrid outrages upon Nature, with this aggravation, that they are needleſſly committed under the ſpecious and plauſible pretext of flying to her aſſiſtence.

The End of the FIRST PART.

A

TREATISE

OF

MIDWIFERY.

PART the SECOND.

Containing various obſervations on the labor and delivery of lying-in women, including a diſcuſſion of the pretended neceſſity for the employing inſtruments.

INTRODUCTION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the numerous productions of writers on the art of ſuccoring women in labor, all that has hitherto appeared on that ſubject, ſtill leaves the mind unſatisfied; not that it is ſo unjuſt as to expect

pect perfection in any human art, but from its feeling that, in this particular one, too much is given to theory, and too little to the practical part, or manual function.

While the cauſes of difficult labors are far from ſolidly or ſufficiently explained, and rather obſcured by a cloud of ſcientific jargon, than practically illuſtrated, they give us no tolerably ſure method for preventing or remedying thoſe difficulties. On the contrary, the whole boaſted improvement of the art is reduced, to a pernicious recourſe to inſtruments, which cut at once the knot they cannot unty.

It is then no wonder that there ſhould ſtill, in all the books and obſervations hitherto given on this matter, exiſt a void lamentably unfilled; and as this void evidently conſiſt leſs in the theory than the practice, the ſuperior qualifications, and natural endowments of the women for the manual operation, point out the fitneſs of the greater dependence on them for the filling up what, humanly ſpeaking, can be filled up of that void.

Let

LET the phyſicians, the ſurgeons inſtruct the midwives in ſo much of anatomy as is neceſſary to their function; let them afford them, either in writing or verbally, their guidance and direction in the conſequences or occaſionally in the preliminaries of management of the lying-in; all this is right, ſalutary, and in due courſe: but that men ſhould pretend to the manual operation in theſe caſes, it certainly neither is nor can be their buſineſs. Nor is this negation of propriety a reproach to them. Will any man think it an indignity to be told, he cannot clear-ſtarch, hem a ruffle, or make a bed as handily as a woman? The exceptions are the ſhame; and in this department of art it would be truer to ſay, that there are no exceptions than that there are only a few.

BUT can we wonder at the inſufficiency of the lights thrown into the art of midwifery by that cloud of writers who have treated of it, when ſo few of them having had any other view than advertiſing themſelves, and being incapable of ſaying any thing to the purpoſe, of the art of deliver-

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ing the women, have filled up their books with insignificant digressions, or things intirely foreign from the point?

In some you see all distempers of women collateral to their pregnancy, which is certainly a very necessary and an infinitely extensive subject, while on the practical article of the deliverance they give you nothing but what is barren, jejune, or even false. Others, by way of filling up, run digressively into a discussion of the methods of treating infants. Others again have written only to recommend some pretended secrets, as powders, preparations, &c. Some have swelled their volumes with the more or less commodious structure of a couch, or the mechanism of a close-stool, or the make of different sorts of syringes for anodine injections. In others you meet with remedies for the deformities of the human body, for the contractions or stiffnesses of the muscles of the shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet, thighs, haunches, &c. to straiten the crooked, and even, in a treatise on midwifery, to extirpate a polypus from the nose. Others, with all the parade of justly exclaiming a-

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gainſt noſtrum-mongers, the plauſible writing againſt which ſerves at once to fill up, and give them an air of ſuperiority to ſuch trumpery, ſubſtitute however nothing better of their own than the recommendation of ſome inſtrument, which they give you for a maſter-piece of invention; and to eſtabliſh which, they cry down every inſtrumen of other practitioners, though not one jot inferior to it in any thing, but the not being the neweſt. Thus, after having peruſed ſuch a multiplicity of authors, it is incredible to ſay how little true, or practitically uſeful knowledge is to be picked out of the whole maſs of them. You find almoſt every thing in them but what you are looking for.

In the mean time, the ſuperficial examiner of things, who ſees ſuch a number of volumes, furniſhed by theſe pretenders to the art of midwifery, cannot conceive they contain matter ſo little eſſential as they do. The ſcientific air diffuſed over them, not a little embelliſhed with pretty prints of machines, as of a windowed forceps, a ſtool, or of a gravid uterus, all theſe con

tribute

tribute to throw the duſt of erudition into the eyes of thoſe, who do not penetrate beyond the ſurface of things. And thus the aids and appendages of the art, or what is yet worſe, even the abuſes of it, paſs for the art itſelf, the main of which, as it undoubtedly conſiſts in the expertneſs or dexterity of the manual practice, can be ſo little and ſo imperfectly conveyed by deſcription. I am however far from denying the benefit which may reſult to midwives, from conſulting all that has been written on this ſubject. I am far from encouraging ignorance in the women of this profeſſion. Their ſkill in the manual function cannot but be improved by the addition of a ſound and competent theory. But it ſhould always be remembered, that the very baſis or capital point of the art is the manual dexterity; and in that point, the moſt learned of the men muſt yeild to the moſt ignorant of the women. A point which the mens ſurpaſſing the women in every thing elſe can never compenſate: no not with all thoſe dreadful "artificial hands", of which they boaſt ſo much their invention, in the room of the infinitely perferably *natural* ones, of which

which the uſe, in this office, becomes the men as little, as their hands ſeem formed for it; and I might add, their heads, if they themſelves can poſſibly think otherwiſe. In ſuch an opinion the ignorance is theirs.

As to the treatiſe herein offered on the art of midwifery, as the object of it is principally to attack particular abuſes and dangerous innovations in it, it will not be expected that the ſame ſhould furniſh a compleat general courſe of practice. But this I dare aver that if I ſhould be induced to attempt ſuch a work, it will not be the worſe for my conſulting more the experience I have of Nature in her operations in this one of her ſo capital concerns, than the authorities of men, who ſeem or pretend to know ſo little of her, as to think of aſſiſting her with inſtruments, formed only for her deſtruction, or at leaſt for doing her more damage by their violence, than any reaſon to hope good from them can juſtify.

Here I ſhall not offer any digreſſions on phyſic, anatomy, chemiſtry, or pharmacy;

macy; I ſhall confine myſelf entirely to the points of my buſineſs of the manual operation. Let the phyſician preſcribe, the ſurgeon bleed, the chymiſt contribute medicines, the apothecary make them up; with none of theſe profeſſions do I preſume to interfere. But as to the man-midwife, who not only ſo often preſumes in ſome meaſure to repreſent them all, but to join to them the exerciſe of an art ſo unnatural to his ſex, I ſhould think myſelf wanting to my duty in my profeſſion, if I did not point out the miſchief I apprehend to reſult from eſpecially that method of practice, on which he grounds the pretence of neceſſity for his practiſing it at all; and this chiefly forms the object of this ſecond part, in ſupplement to my firſt.

Of Deliveries.

We underſtand, by deliveries, in general, the iſſue of the fœtus out of the mother's womb.

These are diſtinguiſhed into two kinds, the one natural, the other preternatural.

The

THE natural one, is that in which the fœtus comes out in the moſt ordinary way, when it preſents the head foremoſt.

IT is deemed preternatural, when the fœtus preſents in the paſſage any other part than the head.

THESE two kinds are again ſubdivided into two diſtinctions of labor, of eaſy or difficult, becauſe both the natural and preternatural mode of delivery may be eaſy or difficult.

THE delivery is termed eaſy when the fœtus comes out readily, and without the aid of art.

IT is termed difficult, when the labor of it is hard, and the fœtus does not make its way out but with pain, and with the help and aſſiſtent induſtry of the midwife.

IN the caſes of a natural and eaſy delivery, there is little or no actual occaſion

for the preſence of the midwife, beyond that of receiving the fœtus, tying the navel-ſtring, giving the child to be kept warm, and then delivering the mother of the after-birth. The ſpirits of the patient are then to be recompoſed, her agitation calmed, a warm and ſoft linnen cloth applied to the ſtomach; a warm ſhift and bed-gown put on her; a linnen cloth to be laid on four-fold over the belly; a double-napkin round her, and ſhe to be placed in a bed well warmed. Such is the ſummary of the proceſs to be obſerved in thoſe common caſes.

In the deliveries, on a preternatural labor, when they are eaſy, the ſame method takes place: there being no difference, but that in one the child will have been received by the head, in the other by the feet.

These kinds of labors are ſo eaſy, that there is no need of demonſtrating their being to be terminated without the aid of inſtruments. When the fœtus preſents itſelf promiſingly, Nature is beſt left to her own action, and nothing ſhould be precipitated

pitated in the manual function, unleſs ſome unexpected accident ſhould intervene, and require interpoſition, ſuch as a great flooding, or other exigency.

As to the preternatural delivery, the better practice is not to delay the extraction of the fœtus, after the diſcharge of the waters; nor ſtay till her ſtrength ſhall have been exhauſted. On the preſenting of a fair hold, and a ſufficient overture, no difficulty ſhould be made of extracting.

All that is to be obſerved then, is not to prematurate this extraction: not to proceed, in ſhort, like thoſe unſkilful, or inconſiderate practitioners, who are no ſooner entered the patient's room, but they want to have their operation diſpatched out of hand. Nothing can be more important to the well-doing of the patient, than for no violence to be uſed to Nature, who loves to go her own full time, without diſturbance or moleſtation. In this point then great caution and circumſpection are requiſite.

It ſhould alſo be obſerved, that it is wrong for the midwife to leave a woman newly lain-in, however happily delivered. It is neceſſary to ſtay by her for ſome hours afterwards, till ſhe is in ſuch a ſtate of tranquility and eaſe, as may leave nothing to fear of thoſe after-diſaſters which too often happen.

Some celebrated practitioners and authors upon midwifery have been ſurprized to ſee women, after their going their time without miſ-adventure, and after having been readily and happily brought to bed die ſuddenly. There are too many of both the female and the men-midwives who have no notion of this misfortune till it is too late to prevent it. The cauſe of this melancholic accident is unknown to many practitioners of the art. Some have confeſſed their ignorance of it: others have erroneouſly, others deficiently accounted for it. But all are ſurprized when the patient is the victim of it: eſpecially as it follows, in ſome caſes that afford the beſt grounded hopes.

Mes-

MESSIEURS MAURICEAU and De la Motte give us examples of theſe unexpected deaths. The firſt, in his 230th obſervation, ſays,

"I DELIVERED a woman of a very cor-
"pulent habit, aged about thirty-five
"years, of her firſt child, which was a
"luſty girl, alive, and that came natural-
"ly. This woman had been near two days
"in labor, with ſmall ſlow pains or throws,
"after which the waters having burſt forth
"with a ſtrong throw, ſhe had ſubſequent-
"ly favorable ones, which made her bring
"forth as happily as one could wiſh. I
"immediately delivered her: but to my
"great ſurprize, ſcarce had ſhe been a
"quarter of an hour after delivery, that
"ſhe of a ſudden fell into violent faint-
"ings, with an oppreſſion at the breaſt,
"and a great agitation of the whole body,
"which was inſtantly followed by a con-
"vulſion, cauſed by a loſs of blood, of
"which ſhe died a quarter of an hour af-
"terwards.

" THIS (adds Mr. Mauriceau) was one " of thoſe kind of fatalities which no hu- " man prudence can elude or parry."

LA MOTTE had the ſame caſe happened under his hands, which I need not repeat here, being inſerted in the firſt part of this work, where, p. 131, I ventured to promiſe an eſſay of mine, to give a leſs unſatisfactory reaſon of ſuch deaths, than what is to be found even in thoſe two celebrated authors whom our cotemporaries conſider as their maſters in the art of midwifery. Theſe impute thoſe unforeſeen deaths to occult and inevitable *cauſes*. I own, I do not intirely think them either occult or inevitable. I doubtleſs may be miſtaken, but of this I am ſure, I ſhall advance nothing but what is authenticated to me by my own obſervation and experience.

AN over-repletion of blood, and a defect in the contraction of the uterus, of which all the veſſel being open are too ſlow in recovering their occluſion, are generally ſpeaking, the cauſes of theſe diſeaſes. I could

could ſupport this opinion by ſome chirurgical axioms, but I preſume it will be thought more ſatisfactorily proved by the ſucceſs of the method of practice, which I would recommend to prevent or cure thoſe dangerous or rather fatal cauſes.

As to know that a woman may thus periſh unexpectedly a quarter of an hour after delivery, is enough to require the being on one's guard for uſing a ſalutary prevention; I would adviſe attention, eſpecially to her conſtitution.

Whenever therefore a pregnant woman is obſerved to be remarkably corpulent, and full of blood, with a good conſtitution, ſhe ſhould be adviſed to loſe ſome blood, once or twice during her pregnancy, by way of precaution. This is of great ſervice to rarefy the blood, and obviate thoſe exceſſive hemorrhages, which are to be dreaded on their lying-in. Then nothing is to be precipitated during their labors, that Nature may have full time to prediſpoſe the uterus to enter into contraction by due degrees, that is to ſay, neither

too quick, not too ſlow. But if, notwithſtanding theſe precautions, there ſhould, after delivery, ſupervene any conſiderable loſs of blood, followed with faintings or oppreſſions, the patient muſt be ſtirred, excited to cough and ſneeze contributively to the evacuation of the blood, which otherwiſe is apt to clot in the uterus, and would ſuffocate her if not expelled.

If by this mean the evacuation does not naturally take place, which may be perceived by the faintings of the patient, the midwife muſt, without loſing time, put her hand into the bowel, and extract all the clots of blood ſhe will not fail of finding there, and of which the preſence, as being extraneous matter, neceſſarily oppoſe the contraction of this organ, and quickly ſuffocates the woman, if ſhe is not timely relieved.

These hemorrhages are but too frequent, eſpecially with thoſe women who neglect the precautionary bleeding; and ſuch ſudden death too commonly the conſequence of neglecting, or of not knowing that the moſt

ſalutary

ſalutary practice, in theſe caſes, is to well evacuate the uterus by the operation of the hand, where Nature appears in the leaſt tardy or deficient.

THE long experience I have of this manual help, which has never failed of ſucceſs with me, warrants my averring, that there is little or no danger, in theſe caſes, to women, provided the midwife employs herſelf dextrouſly to clear them while time ſerves. Their relief is inſtantaneous. They come to themſelves preſently: they are reſtored to a freedom of reſpiration: nor will they have ſo much as been ſenſible of this operation of the hand, which will nevertheleſs have ſaved their lives.

THERE have been men-midwives, that paſs even for learned, but who from their ignorance of this ſo ſimple and eaſy method of relief, have been in the diſagreeable circumſtance of ſeeing many women periſh under their hands, though they had to all appearance been very happily delivered.

WITH reſpect to pregnant women, there is again another point of great conſequence to aſcertain. Great care muſt be taken not to miſtake the ſigns of delivery. This is a very eſſential matter. Nothing ſcarce can be more dangerous, than to excite a woman to the laſt labor-pains, which will not fail of exhauſting that ſtrength of her's, in vain, which had ſo much better be reſerved for the ſupport of her in the time ſhe will really need it. So that a midwife ought to make it her buſineſs clearly to diſtinguiſh the ſpurious pains from the true ones. Where a woman near her time feels pains in the belly, the loins, or even the ſexual parts; they are not always to be taken for the true labor-pains. In this point, the *touching* will be a great guidance.

IF the fœtus is ſtill high in the uterus, and the ſituation of it does not indicate a readineſs for extruſion; if the waters are not ſufficiently prepared, or their preſſure down not in due forwardneſs, the pains muſt be aſſuaged by ſome calming anodine remedies: the patient muſt be left to her reſt,

till

till things declare themſelves more openly; and then, as ſhe will not have been fruitleſsly fatigued and tormented, the labor may proceed happily.

THERE have been men-practitioners ſo very unſkilful, or at a loſs for delivering women by the operation of their *hands*, that they tortured their *heads* to diſcover *medicines* to ſave themſelves the tediouſneſs of Nature's taking her own time, as if ſhe was to do her work the better for their hurrying her. Towards the atchievement of this end, they brought into play certain drugs, to which they gave the appellation of hyſteric, and placed or pretended to place great confidence in them.

EVEN ſome of our modern practitioners prove, at leaſt, by their practice, that they have faith in the virtue of ſuch drugs, ſince they continue to uſe them. They are ſtill ſuffered to make a figure in many of the Pharmacopœas, though no ſure experience hitherto has verified their efficacy. On the contrary, a thouſand and a thouſand examples might be quoted in demon-

demonſtration of their inſufficiency and danger. I ſhall content myſelf with producing here the teſtimony of Mr. De la Motte, in the ſecond book of his obſervations, and he is not the only man-midwife that does ſuch medicines the juſtice of diſapproving them.

Obſervation 174.

" A celebrated man-midwife of this " town (ſays Mr. de la Motte) pretended " to have a marvellous powder to provoke " labor-pains, and accelerate parturition. " This powder was compoſed of galba- " num, myrrh, ſavin, rue, and other " drugs, of which he made the patient " take a doſe, to haſten a delivery, when " the labor was lingering, from half a " drachm to a drachm, and after the ef- " fect of this medicine, which ended " commonly in leaving the patient in a " worſe condition than before the taking " it, he ſubſtituted the uſe of the crotchet, " which was indeed an infallible method " of putting a ſpeedy end to the labor; " and of which he as well as his fellow- " practitioners made ſuch a murderous uſe,

" the

" the aid of the hand well conducted be-
" ing unknown to them.

" THE ſame operator (ſays Mr. de la
" Motte) was ſent for to aſſiſt a lady who
" had continued in labour for three days,
" to whom he propoſed a doſe of his pow-
" ders, to which ſhe readily conſented in
" the hopes of a ſpeedy delivery. Un-
" luckily, not moſt certainly for the lady,
" but for the honor of the powders, the
" operator, not having had the providence
" of having them about him, was forced
" to go home for them. The lady, in
" the mean while, was brought very hap-
" pily to bed, juſt as he was re-entering
" the room with his doſe for her. What a
" pity this was! What would not have
" been the boaſt of the virtue of thoſe
" pretious powders, if the delivery had
" waited for them but half a quarter of
" an hour, though they would not have
" had the leaſt ſhare in it, ſince it would
" have been purely the work of Nature
" and Time.

" THIS celebrated man-midwife was
" called to two other women of my ac-
" quain-

" quaintance, of whom the labor some-
" what resembled that of this lady, but
" of which the consequences were very
" different: he had made them take
" his powders to no manner of purpose,
" when seeing that a day had passed with-
" out their producing the expected effect,
" he had recourse to his *crotchet*, with
" which he quickly *dispatched* both the
" deliveries."

Observation 174, of the same Mr. De la Motte.

" A gentleman who lived upon his for-
" tune, without professing surgery, though
" he had served his time to it, and had
" even formerly exercised it, not only in
" France, but in Italy, and in other foreign
" countries, told me, in conversation, that
" he had an infallible remedy to make a
" woman bring forth instantaneously, how-
" ever lingering and difficult her labor
" might naturally be. Of this, he said,
" he had made undoubted experiments,
" and that he had obtained this secret from
" an Italian, under oath of not disclosing it
" to any one. He was more than a little
" sur-

" ſurprized at finding me without curioſity
" to learn from him this pretended ſecret,
" which he imagined muſt concern me ſo
" much, as one who made open profeſſion
" of the obſtetrical art; and ſtill greater
" was his ſurprize at ſeeing me change
" the ſubject, without any ſign of atten-
" tion to what he had been ſaying on this
" head."

" In proceſs of time, he married, and
" his wife being pregnant was got into the
" time of her labor-pains towards delivery.
" It became now expedient for him to de-
" clare this famous ſecret to me, which
" was no other than half a drachm of bo-
" rax in a glaſs of any innocent liquid a-
" greeable to the palate of the patient. But
" as this doſe happened to be adminiſtered
" by one who had no ſort of faith in it, it
" had no effect: his wife lay four days and
" four nights in labor; the child died the
" moment after it was born, and the mo-
" ther narrowly eſcaped following it.

Obſer-

Obſervation 176, (of M. De la Motte)

" As I was at Caën, a town of Norman-
" dy, attending the lying-in of a lady there,
" an old ſtander of a practitioner of that
" place, and a man of good abilities, told
" me, that he had been lately ſent for to a
" woman who had continued ſeveral days
" in labor, with ſlow and moderate pains.
" As he found the fœtus well ſituated, he
" made the patient take an infuſion of three
" drachms of ſena in the juice of a ſeville
" orange, in order to quicken the throws
" and advance the delivery, which indeed
" came on ten or twelve hours afterwards,
" but the woman died, one may ſay, im-
" mediately after it.

" To this account (continues M. De la
" Motte) I oppoſed, for anſwer, that be-
" ing at Bayeux, on the like occaſion, an
" old practitioner in ſurgery of that place,
" in conjunction with whom I had been
" called to viſit a patient, told me, in con-
" verſation, that he underſtood midwifery
" very well, that he had even, not long
" before,

" before terminated a delivery given over by
" another ſurgeon; that the child, one arm
" of which hung out, was dead, before
" he put his hand to it, and that the mo-
" ther, though well delivered, died ſoon
" after."

THESE examples may ſuffice to prove, that the notion of giving hiſteric medicines, for which the inventors did not forget to make themſelves be well paid, exiſted in M. De la Motte's time, who is not but a modern author: nor are they even to this hour abſolutely exploded, tho' ſome of the men-midwives themſelves have joined Mr. de la Motte's cry againſt them. It gives however thoſe men-practitioners, who exclaim againſt a quackery in others, by which themſelves get nothing, a good ſort of an air: it ſerves even to render that more pernicious quackery of their inſtruments the leſs obnoxious to ſuſpicion. Nothing is eaſier to give up than that by which nothing is got. If the inſtruments were not a plea for the very eſſence of ſuch a thing as a man-midwife, they too would be given up. However, it will hardly be

denied, that thoſe ſame pompous hiſteric medicines were the invention of *learned* men-practitioners, and not of thoſe poor ignorant midwives, who, with reſpect to women in labor, are of opinion, that there can nothing be more effectual for their well-doing, than in the firſt place giving Nature fair-play, and, when requiſite, to aſſiſt her with the management of *natural* hands ſkilfully conducted: always obſerving neither to lapſe nor precipitate the critical time of ſuch aſſiſtence. In the mean time, let a humane reader but reflect how many mothers and children muſt have been, and perhaps ſtill continue to be the victims of a reliance in ſuch medicines, and he will allow, that ſuch errors of practice, tho' not capital in the intention, are too often deplorably ſo in the effect. Is it not true to ſay, conſidering the havock of the human ſpecies, ſo preſumably made by quackery and empiriciſm in general, that the lives of the ſubject are leſs ſacred than their property? Surely they are leſs guarded, either by the laws, or by common ſenſe.

As

As to a fœtus that preſents an arm, or any other part than the head or feet, there is rarely any thing to do but to ſlide the hand all along that arm, or other part it may preſent, to find out the feet, and terminate the delivery; without its being neceſſary to attempt the reduction of any part or member.

Most of the writers on midwifery often ſtart difficulties where there are really none. They often give us emphatical accounts of a head too large, and a paſſage too narrow, in which they ſtate them as difficulties that are invincible, when the caſe is far from being ſo. When the fœtus preſents fair, and is in a good poſture, our method of practice is, to adviſe the patient to remain as quiet a-bed as poſſible, avoiding every thing that may tend to fatigue her body, or hurry her ſpirits, to reſerve in ſhort her ſtrength as much as poſſible. With time and patience the head of the fœtus ſcarcely ever fails of moulding itſelf to the paſſage,

through a particular providence of Nature, which has ſo ordered it, that the parietal bones of the head of the fœtus, ſo flexile as to ride over one another, form a kind of oval figure, which facilitates the iſſue, and diſpoſe it for making way for itſelf, through the extruſive preſſure of the labor-throws. Mean while nothing ſhould be done to irritate the pains; the membranes ſhould not be unneceſſarily or untimely burſt, which loſes the benefit of the waters. You can hardly, in this caſe, rely too much on the benevolent efforts of Nature: ſhe is conſtantly at work for the patient's delivery. Interruptions ſometimes only ſerve to mar or retard a favorable criſis: but all abrupt force or violence is carefully to be avoided. As to bad poſtures of children, I ſhall treat of them in the ſequel, and of the means to remedy them.

CHAP.

Of DIFFICULT and SEVERE Caſes.

IF an eaſy delivery requires nothing of extraordinary aſſiſtence; it is not ſo with a difficult one. All the knowledge, experience, dexterity, ſtrength, prudence, tenderneſs, charity, and preſence of mind, of which a woman is capable, are requiſite to accompliſh certain laborious deliveries.

It has been, in all times, very well known, that the moſt natural ſituation for the fœtus coming into the world, is that, in which the head preſents firſt, it being that which commonly makes way for the reſt of the body. Yet this delivery may become difficult, in proportion to the obſtacles incident to it: obſtacles not always ſurmountable, without great ſkill and induſtry employed in aid of Nature.

ON the other hand, when it is felt that the fœtus preſents any other part than the head, this poſition, called preternatural, oftenеſt occaſions the delivery to be more

laborious and hard to accompliſh, in proportion to the more or leſs trouble there may be to ſcarch and come rightly at the feet.

MANY Engliſh and French authors have given us a long enumeration of the cauſes which may make deliveries difficult and laborious. The curious may have recourſe to them; as for me, who have not propoſed to myſelf here a treatiſe compleat on all points, I ſhall content myſelf with ſetting forth only what tends to fullfil my propoſed aim, that is to ſay, to take notice of thoſe principal points, which firſt moved inſufficient midwives to call in ſurgery to their aſſiſtence, to remedy their blunders, to retrieve their miſchief, or to repair their omiſſions. I ſhall conſider the kinds of exigencies, which the men-operators ſeized for a pretext of employing their iron and ſteel-inſtruments, the uſe of the natural hand, being yet more unknown to them than to the meaneſt midwife, and by this means, for the cure of confeſſedly a great evil, obtruded an infinitely greater one, and more extenſive, in every ſenſe, and in every point of light, that of men taking the practical

practical part of midwifery into their own hands, or rather into their artificial ones of iron and ſteel, from which they derive all the authority of their introduction in the character of men-midwives.

THE labors then which are generally ſpeaking looked on the moſt nice, and arduous, may be comprized under the following heads.

1ſt. THE obliquity of the uterus or womb.

2dly. THE extraction of the head of the fœtus ſevered from the body, and which ſhall have remained in the uterus.

3dly. THAT labor in which the head of the fœtus remains hitched in the paſſage, the body being intirely come out of the uterus.

4thly. WHEN the head of the fœtus preſents itſelf foremoſt, but ſticks in the paſſage.

To theſe I ſhall add the caſe of the pendulous belly, which is not without its difficulty.

Of all theſe claſſes of labors I ſhall treat ſeparately. But before I proceed on them, I preſume, that it may not be improper preliminarily to corroborate what I have ſaid of the intruſion of the men into the practice of a profeſſion, of the eſſential part of which they were ſo ignorant and diſqualified for it, by the teſtimony which one of the beſt men-midwives in Europe has not refuſed to the truth.

This is M. de la Motte, one of the ableſt and moſt intelligent modern writers on the ſubject of midwifery, of which his works form an inconteſtable proof. The ingenuity and candor with which he has written, muſt render him leſs ſuſpected than any other. This is no midwife. He is a man, and eſteemed an able practitioner, who learned the principles of the art from Madam la Marche, head-midwife of the Hôtel Dieu at Paris. He made his advantage

vantage of the works of his predeceſſors Mauriceau, Peu, and of all the beſt authors on this ſubject. All that was worth it in them he has transfuſed into his own writings; and that in a very clear manner. He collected whatever the beſt phiſicians had uſefully ſaid on the diſeaſes of mother and child: in ſhort, he has added many good obſervations and reflexions of his own, in the journals of his manual practice: the reading of his works, with ſome precaution however, cannot but be uſeful to the ſtudents of the art.

I DO this writer this juſtice, with the more readineſs and pleaſure, for, that though he himſelf exerciſed the profeſſion of man-midwife, and conſequently in favor of his own practice, and of the pupils he was bringing up, was not without the injuſtice of adopting the prejudices of his cotemporaries too indiſcriminately againſt the midwives; he does not ſuppreſs any truth relative to the art itſelf. But even, as to the midwives, the truth eſcapes him without any deſign on his ſide of its coming out. But ſuch is the force of truth. And thus it appears. M. De la Motte wrote in a little ſorry country-town at a great diſtance

diſtance from the capital, being at the very extremity of the kingdom of France, on a ſea-coaſt, where there were no other mid-wives than poor country-women, without knowledge, without ſkill, or any other qualification, than a little of the habit of attending women in labor. Yet with all theſe deficiencies it will appear, that the men-practitioners were far more to be dreaded than thoſe poor ignorant creatures, who had ſcarce any thing but Nature for their guide.

I SHALL here give the ſubſtance of what he ſays in his preface, followed by ſome examples of the unſkilfulneſs, or rather of the moſt profound ignorance of the moſt able men-midwives of his time, for forty leagues round his place of reſidence in the country.

" IT is (ſays M. De la Motte) aſtoniſh-
" ing, that the obſtetrical art ſhould, until
" the beginning of the preceding age, have
" been left either to ignorant women, or
" to ſurgeons, who had not (any more
" than too many to this day) any other
" reſource in difficult labors, than ſome
" inſtru-

" inſtrument guided by undextrous hands,
" always ſure of killing the child, and en-
" dangering the mother. Do not theſe
" poor innocents deſerve compaſſion for
" being expoſed to operations of ſurgery,
" which one would rationally think they
" could not need, till providence ſhould
" have at leaſt given them leave to come
" into the world?"

HERE be it obſerved, that by the word " ignorant," M. De la Motte ſhould not intend the application of it to the midwives of the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, ſince, by his own confeſſion, it is the beſt ſchool of midwifery in Europe. Nor certainly is he in the wrong. Be it in honor of truth allowed me to ſay, that I know of thoſe women who have ſerved their apprenticeſhip in this hoſpital, who would think they made a wretched bargain, if they exchanged the manner of operating they learned there, for all the Latin, Greek, Arabic, or the iron and ſteel inſtruments of the beſt man-practitioner in Europe; even though his excellence in the manual function ſhould be thrown into the ſcale for make-weight. The moſt

conſtant

conſtant ſucceſs juſtifies their practice. In whatever ſituation the fœtus has preſented, I have ſeen them, without having recourſe to a man-midwife, and conſequently to inſtruments, procure a happy delivery in very difficult labors. I have myſelf ſeen one deliver a child that had been dead in the mother's womb for near ſix weeks, without diſmembering it; and though it was half-putrified, and the head ſo rotten-tender as to have no ſolid conſiſtence, I dare advance this, without fear of being falſified, ſince I can name the mother, now alive in London, the witneſſes, the place and year.

Such real midwives as I am here diſcribing, for I do not mean the ſpurious nominal ones, only fit to *create* work for the inſtrumentarians, or whoſe cue of intereſt is to do ſo, have no reaſon to apprehend, that in the numbers they have lain, there can be any found, that can complain of having ſuffered, or of ſuffering any the leaſt damage or inconvenience, after their lying-in, that might be imputed to ignorance or miſpractice.

On the contrary, I dare aver, that ſuch, genuine midwives have cured many women who had received notable injury, before they came under their hands, in their having paſſed through thoſe of the men-practitioners. Nothing being more agreeable to Nature, to Reaſon, to Experience, than that the method of practice of a ſkilful midwife is not only the moſt eaſy and gentle, the leaſt painful, but aſſuredly the moſt ſafe both for mother and child. This is what the moſt ſevere examination will to thoſe, who give themſelves the trouble of making it, eſtabliſh, in contempt of that faſhion, by which ſo pernicious an error, as that of preferring men-practitioners, has acquired more credit and influence than ſo ſalutary and demonſtrable a truth, as that for which I am contending. In the mean time, let us hear what M. De la Motte himſelf, a man-midwife, ſays of thoſe brethren of his, of whom heaven grant there may not exiſt to this day too many reſemblers!

" To

" To the ſhame (ſays M. de la Motte)
" of the profeſſion they exerciſe, they
" have no guide but their avarice, while
" the groſſeſt ignorance of the art of mid-
" wifery itſelf is their lot. Such are
" much to be dreaded by women in diffi-
" cult labor; for (adds he) they having
" no help to offer them but that of their
" inſtruments, they employ them indiffe-
" rently in all the ſituations in which the
" fœtus preſents. Nay, even the hands
" of ſome who will uſe their hands, are
" not leſs dangerous when miſconducted.
" The ignorant therefore ſhould never
" meddle with lyings-in. It would ſave
" them from the reproach they may incur
" of murder, in undertaking what they
" cannot execute, and what ſurpaſſes their
" ſkill. They would not furniſh *ſcencs*
" that make one *ſhudder* with *horror*.

" I ſpeak here of ſo many poor women,
" whoſe ſtrength ſhall have been exhauſt-
" by a great loſs of blood, cauſed by the
" violences which an ignorant man-mid-
" wife ſhall have made them ſuffer, I ſpeak
" of

" of women, whoſe parts ſhall have been
" all bruiſed, and ſo vilely treated and
" torn, as in ſome to lay the anus and
" vagina into one, beſides their children
" being diſmembered, ſome their arms or
" legs plucked off, others the whole bo-
" dy, the head being left behind in the
" uterus."

THIS is the language of a man-midwife himſelf, who candidly declaims againſt the errors of his fellow-practitioners, undoubtedly without deſigning that ſuch their errors ſhould be wreſted into an objection to the practice of that art being committed to the men. Such a concluſion would in me be unfair, and a vain attempt to impoſe on the reader the laudable condemnation of an abuſe, for an indiſcriminate reproach to the whole ſet of men-midwives. This would however be but a kind of retaliative treatment of thoſe, who, from the defective practice of the ignorant and unſkilful midwives, of which if there was no more than one in the world, that one would be much too many, take the unjuſt handle of inveighing againſt midwives in general.

EVEN

EVEN la Motte himſelf, who, as I have before with pleaſure obſerved, was really as capable a man in the profeſſion of midwifery as a man can be, at leaſt to judge of him by his writings, has embraced every occaſion of boaſting the ſuperiority of the men to the women in the exerciſe of midwifery. But while he taxes men of *ſcenes* that make one *ſhudder* with *horror*, the miſtakes he imputes to the women, which are bad enough in all conſcience, are not however of that atrocious nature, as thoſe he relates of the men. Nay, with all his deſire of under-rating the women, he falls into even pitiful contradictions. Let the reader himſelf decide on the following one.

UPON an article of practice, for which M. De la Motte blames the midwives, and what an article? not ſuch as he reproaches to the men-practitioners, murdering, maiming the women, or tearing their children limb from limb, but purely for their applying certain bandages to the belly of women after their lying-in, in order to keep that part ſmooth from wrinkles; this

this very author, I ſay, who allowed the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, where the manual function is wholly confined to women, to be the beſt ſchool of midwifery in Europe, where he himſelf wiſhed, and wiſhed in vain, to be admitted to practiſe, and, in ſhort, from the head-midwife, of which Madam de la Marche he himſelf probably learned all that was worth any thing in his practice, thus ſpeaks of the midwives bred up in that hoſpital.

"THIS prerogative of having ſerved apprentice in the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, is not for theſe women, an *indifferent* matter, for though they were to have no more than a *ſhadow* of *ſenſe*, they are perſuaded, that in ſetting themſelves off with a *title* that does not render them more *capable*, they ought to be honored and reſpected above all others, which they would not fail of being, if they were to give ſome marks of ſufficiency beyond what others can give.*"

* See La Motte, p. 646, of the quarto edition, Leyden.

THE nonſenſe of this objection of Mr. De la Motte is too glaring to need a comment. If an education in the beſt ſchool of midwifery in Europe, does not give a woman a right to plead it for a title to reliance on her ſuperior ſufficiency, without any reaſon therefore to accuſe her of vanity, what can give her a title?

BUT to return to M. De la Motte's ſentiments on the practice of the men-midwives; it will eaſily be ſeen, that the horrors he objects to their practice, and of which he himſelf undoubtedly endeavoured to ſteer as clear as he could, were of a nature, without the leaſt breach of candor, to ſuppoſe liable to repetitions wherever ſo falſe a doctrine and practice prevail as the ſubſtituting ſteel and iron-inſtruments, or "artificial hands" to natural ones.

LET us now ſee what Mr. De la Motte thinks of the uſe of the CROTCHET.

"WHEN

"When I ſettled in my province (ſays "this author*) I found ſeveral ancient "maſter-ſurgeons, who pretended to help "the women in their difficult, or preter-"natural labors, ſolely with the uſe of "the crotchet; without ever, in their life "having made any *delivery*, but in that man-"ner, and as ſoon as they had extracted "the fœtus with their crotchet, they left "the reſt or the after-birth to be brought "away by a woman, as they themſelves "knew nothing of the matter. When "they were fetched to help a woman in la-"bor, they took their crotchet, went to "the woman, whom they put into poſture, "and whether the child preſented the head, "breech, arm or leg, whether it was dead "or alive, a woman's having paſſed a day "and a half in labor was cue more than "enough for them to go to work with "their crotchet."

The following extracts from the ſame Mr. De la Motte, may ſerve to confirm the foregoing obſervation.

* See La Motte, p. 262. lib. v. chap. 2.

" OBSERVATION 187. I was ſent
" for to lay Madam de ..... about fif-
" teen leagues from Valognes, the place of
" my reſidence, and there was at the ſame
" time a ſurgeon of the town where I then
" was, who had been fetched to lay a wo-
" man that had been in labor from the day
" before, whoſe child preſented the vertex:
" he, without further examination, put
" her into a convenient poſture, and with
" his crotchet brought away the child at
" ſeveral pulls, with much pain and labor,
" and threw it under the bed, with the
" after-birth, in the moſt ſevere ſeaſon of
" the year: after which, the operator hug-
" ged himſelf prodigiouſly, for having ſo
" happily accompliſhed ſo difficult a labor.
" Having reſted a little, and juſt as he was
" going, a woman curious, bethought her-
" ſelf of ſeeing whether it was a boy or
" girl: ſhe found the poor child yet alive,
" though ſo mangled with the crotchet,
" and that after having remained, in this
" condition, an hour and a half, without
" its having been in the power of ſo vio-
" lent an operation, or of the rigor of the

" wea-

" weather to terminate a life which ſeemed
" to have held out againſt ſo many barba-
" rities, only to reproach the deteſtable
" operator with the enormity of his crime.
" The child was chriſtened and died ſoon
" after.

" REFLEXION. This is what may be
" called a cruel ignorance, &c."—— To the which I add, that if this wretched operator had had the patience to wait ſome time, the child would in all probability have come naturally with any the leaſt help of the hand at every throw of the mother: for ſhe had not been over-time in labor, and the head was not, it ſeems, ſtuck in the paſſage.

" OBSERVATION 196, p. 274. I was
" deſired to go to Cherbourg to lay a poor
" woman there, whom a ſurgeon and a
" man-midwife by profeſſion, belonging
" to that place, had given over I
" found the woman in a condition hard
" to deſcribe, with an arm and a leg of
" her child pulled off, and the remainder
" of the body left behind in the mother's

" womb. I put her into poſture, and in-
" ſtantly delivered her of one child (it
" ſeems ſhe went with twins) who had
" only an arm plucked off: I then ſought
" out the other, whoſe leg had been torn
" away. Strange and fatal ſight, which
" was ſeen by more than twenty women
" preſent, all ready to ſwear to the truth of
" this! I left the woman to their care, af-
" ter having delivered her of the after-birth.
" She had been as much hurt as the chil-
" dren, of whom nothing remained in the
" uterus, by the care I took to evacuate it.
" I left the mother tolerably well conſider-
" ing her condition."

Reflexion. This was the more ſurprizing, for that the firſt operator was an old practitioner, who had been an out-ſurgeon to the Hôtel Dieu above eight years, before M. De la Motte was apprentice there. Yet this man neither was ſenſible of the being twins in the caſe, nor had dexterity enough in the manual function. Here I aſk, could the moſt ignorant midwife have acquitted herſelf worſe than this *man?*

" Ob-

" OBSERVATION 185. A tradeſman's " wife of Valognes being taken in labor " ſent for a midwife. A little while after " her coming, the membranes burſt, the " waters were diſcharged, and the child " preſented an arm. The midwife requi- " ed help. (Probably ſhe might be one " of the ignorant and unſkilful ones) and " two ſurgeons were ſent for, who paſſed " for being the moſt expert ones in the " town. They begun with plucking off " the arm that preſented, though the child " was *alive*. The other arm, as ſoon as " they got hold of it, underwent the ſame " fate. After which they ſtruck the crot- " chet into a rib, which they brought " away, then two, then three, and, at length, " ſtruck the crotchet into the back-bone, " and pulled ſo cleverly together, that they " brought the child away doubled up. " The midwife delivered her of the after- " birth, and notwithſtanding all this ill " uſage, the woman recovered; but it was " a long while firſt."

REFLEXION. (Mr. De la Motte's own) " Was there ever a crueller operation ſeen " both for the mother and child; the firſt " terribly torn, the other barbarouſly diſ- " membered ?

" OBSERVATION 186. The wife of " a tallow-chandler of this town was taken " in labor: the waters were diſcharged, " after which an arm of the child preſent- " ed. Help was ſent for; one of the two " operators (mentioned in the foregoing " obſervation) came with his ſervant and " crotchet. He began his operation, by " plucking off the arm of this certainly " live child, then, without further exa- " mination, he ſtrikes the crotchet into " its body, and pulled, without being " able to bring away any thing. The maſ- " ter, whoſe ſtrength was exhauſted, made " his pupil help him, and they both pul- " led as hard as they could: ſtill nothing " came, and I verily believe that the maſ- " ter would have called in ſome body elſe " to his aſſiſtence, if the handle of the " crotchet had been long enough, or that " the

" the poor woman had not given up the ghoſt
" under the cruel torments they made her
" ſuffer, to ſuch a degree that they forced
" her to part with her life, ſooner than
" with her child.

" REFLEXION. Here was a *delivery*
" in intention, but the execution had
" ſomething horrid, and perfectly odious
" in it. I never could have imagined, that
" two men could have pulled in this man-
" ner, without diſlocating the bones of the
" woman into whom the crotchet had been
" ſtruck: for ſo it was ſhown to be, upon
" the body being opened, in which the
" child was found with an arm plucked off,
" entangled in the umbilical chord round
" its neck, without the leaſt mark of the
" crotchet upon its body: too plain a
" proof this of the crotchet having been
" ſtruck into the mother and not the child,
" and conſequenly of the little circumſpec-
" tion, not to ſay rage, with which the
" ſurgeon had acted upon the body of this
" unhappy creature: for ſurely it muſt be
" granted, that it could be no part of the
" child that could have reſiſted the terrible

" efforts

" efforts made both by maſter and man,
" jointly to bring it away; and yet this
" was one of the BEST * operators in the
" country for HELPING women in labor.

" I COULD make a VOLUME of theſe
" hiſtories, if they were good for any thing
" but to excite horror." Such is the witneſs born by M. De la Motte, as to the *ableſt* men-midwives of his time, in all his province. Now in order to invalidate the concluſion, ſo natural to be drawn from ſo unexceptionable an atteſtation, againſt the ſuperiority of the practice of the men to that of the women, will it be ſaid, that the men-practitioners, in this country, are in general better educated than ſuch operators as have been above ſhown? If ſo great a falſity ſhould be advanced, let the reader himſelf reflect on what he may eaſily find to be the common method of training up of men-pupils in this art. I have in the firſt part of this work, ſtated ſome reaſons for their inſuffi-

* If theſe *beſt* operators had been examined touching their opinion of midwives; they would moſt probably have told you, they were a parcel of poor inſignificant ignorant creatures.

inſufficiency, both in ſtudy and practice; and the more this point is examined, the more clear will that undoubted truth appear, that if the ignorant midwives are, as they undoubted are, a great evil, they are even bleſſings in compariſon to the generality of the men-practitioners, bred up with the help of artificial Dolls, pretty prints, or even of their perſonal viſitation of thoſe miſerable wretches hired, or under the maſk of charity, forced to undergo, from apprentices or pupils, ſo many inhuman tortures and outrages in vain.

It will alſo perhaps be ſaid, as to the examples I have juſt produced from M. De la Motte, that ſince his time, that is to ſay, about the beginning of this century, that the art of midwifery has received ſo much improvement, as to cancel all impreſſions of fear from ſuch examples. Yes! It has received improvement with a vengeance. If a vain endeavour to perfect inſtruments, impoſſible to be perfected, or againſt common ſenſe to ſuppoſe, even when perfected ſuperior to ſkilful hands, are an improvement, then the art may be called improved. In the mean time, infinite is the miſ-

chief

chief done by ſo many pretending operators, with each his bag of hard-ware at hand, his only proof of ſuperiority to a woman, in practice, conſiſting in thoſe inſtruments. Their negative damage is almoſt as great as their actual one. For by occaſioning the men, and even ignorant midwives to truſt to the calling in their help, the methods of prediſpoſing of the women to parturition, the proper precautions, and actual manual function in the labor-pains, which is a point of the utmoſt importance, are at beſt but ſlightly and prefunctorily, conſequently not ſufficiently, performed, or perhaps wholly neglected. And why? becauſe the inſtruments, the *crotchet*, the *tire-tête*, the *forceps*, are conſidered as ſure reſerves to remedy ſuch deficiencies. This, beſides many other reaſons, encourages the indolence, careleſſneſs, and inattention of the men-practitioners, and even of the midwives, eſpecially of thoſe poor ſuborned creatures recommended by the men-practitioners, paid, as one may ſay in ſome ſenſe, not to do their work ſo well, as that none ſhould be left for their honorable patrons. Thence it has happened, that where an ignorant midwife has, through her unſkilfulneſs,

fulneſs, or for whatever other reaſon, been wanting in prediſpoſing the paſſage, or lapſed the critical moments of the manual aid, ſo that ſhe really is or pretends to be out of her depth, by the exigence being beyond her ability; the man-midwife is called in, who, with his inſtruments, forces that delivery, which might, if juſtice had been done to the patient, have proceeded in a natural way, with much leſs pain and danger. Be this remarked, without my ſpeaking here of the extraordinary tortures and outrages, ſuch as M. De la Motte himſelf has related. The woman then is, by the help of inſtruments, delivered by the man-midwife ſo called in. "If he had "but ſtaid a few minutes longer, both "mother and child muſt have been loſt". So believes the father of the child, ſo believes the mother, ſo believe moſt of the parties concerned, and what is more, ſometimes ſo believes the man-midwife himſelf. Though the ſtrict truth has been, that the greateſt part of the pain the mother endured, and every appearance of danger, either to her or to her child, were poſitively owing to nothing but the negligence and miſ-

practice

practice uſed, either by man or woman-practitioner, in reliance, if matters ſhould come to the worſt, on the ſupplemental aid or reparation of errors, by thoſe miſerable inſtruments, which conſtitute all the boaſted improvements of an art, the true nicety and requiſite accuracy of which they are ſo much more calculated to baniſh or deſtroy.

I HAVE however quoted the foregoing examples from M. De la Motte.

FIRST, Becauſe that he himſelf being a man-midwife, and greatly partial to the practice being beſt in the hands of men, his atteſtation muſt be the leſs ſuſpicious: but eſpecially, becauſe he was a profeſſed enemy to inſtruments, and adhered as cloſely as Nature would allow him, to the imitation of thoſe midwives from whom he had received all his *knowledge*, and abuſed them afterwards for their *ignorance*, as if their communication to him of their knowledge could not have been, without leaving themſelves wholly deſtitute of it to enrich him.

SE-

SECONDLY, Becauſe, the ſtories which he relates upon his own knowledge, leaving me the faireſt room to infer the neceſſary repetition of the like tragical events wherever inſtruments are admitted, it became leſs invidious to ſpecify them, than incidents of the like nature here: eſpecially, I ſay here, in London, or in England, where the uſe of thoſe inſtruments grows every day more and more rife, and muſt conſequently furniſh the more examples of pain, deſtruction and danger cauſed by them to the women, weak or prejudice-ridden enough to prefer the men to the women-practitioners.

BOTH Charity then and Prudence preſcribe to me the not pointing out particular perſons to whom I could impute miſ-practice. If any one will affect to treat this ſuppreſſion as not owing thereto, but purely to an impoſſibility of ſpecifying caſes of that ſort, and of proving them; I appeal to the candid reader, whether the nature of the charge conſidered, ſuch a ſpecification can be expect-

ed

ed from me, ſince, from the examples I have produced, I pretend to infer no more than a probability, the grounds of which I ſubmit to himſelf, of the repetition of the like acts from the ſame, or even from encreaſing the ſame practice.

It would not perhaps be otherwiſe impoſſible to give ſome inſtances. For example, I could expand a hint before given, of a man-midwife of this town, who paſſes for eminent in his profeſſion, and who not above five years ago, was called to deliver a woman in labor, whoſe child preſented an arm. This practitioner, inſtead of ſcarching out for the feet, to extract this fœtus, that was quite alive, firſt plucks off one arm, then another, then, at length, gives over the job, and left the poor mother in this condition, who was forced to have recourſe to a midwife to finiſh the delivery.

More than one operator, as I have before obſerved, in very natural deliveries, inſtead of bringing away the after-birth, tore out the body of the uterus; for all their boaſted anatomy.

Ano-

ANOTHER gentleman-midwife delivered a woman of a fine child, or rather received it, for it came naturally and eaſily. Upon which, he took it into his head that he would not deliver her of the after-birth, propoſing to defer this work till next day. And ſo he would have done, if he had not caſually met with a leſs ſenſeleſs practitioner, who repreſented to him the danger to which, by ſo doing, he expoſed the poor patient he had left, and adviſed him to go back as faſt as he could to deliver her.*

I HAVE myſelf been not a little ſurprized at hearing lately ſome ladies mention, with much approbation, the inimitable complaiſance of certain gentlemen-midwives, who have the patience, as they call it, to wait five, ſix, ſeven hours by the clock, be-

* Dr. Smellie ſeems to countenance this practice, where he ſays, p. 232. "*We have already obſerved*, p. 229) *that if there is no danger from a flooding, the woman may be allowed to reſt a little, in order to recover from the fatigue ſhe has undergone, and that the uterus may in contracting have time to ſqueeze and ſeparate the placenta from its inner ſurface.*"

fore they deliver of the after-birth after the iſſue of the child, and that out of tenderneſs to the patients, who, as they ſay, would be ſadly off, if they fell into hands more quick and expeditious.

But while I am thus taking notice of the errors of practice in the men-practitioners, it may be objected to me, that I deal unfairly with my reader.

First, In not furniſhing inſtances of male-practice of the widwives.

Secondly, That whereas I have confeſſed the incapacity of ſome of the midwives, without allowing inferences from them againſt all the profeſſors of the art who are of the female ſex, I ought to make the ſame equitable allowance as to the men-practitioners, and not condemn all for the ſake of thoſe unſufficient ones, which the capable ones themſelves candidly condemn, witneſs among others, M. De la Motte.

Now, as to my omitting ſuch a ſpecification of inſtances of miſpractice in my own ſex,

ſex, it is neither from partiality, nor affectation, that this omiſſion of mine proceeds. For could any one be ſo weak as retaliatively to ſtate caſes, in the manner I have done, of miſpractice of ſome midwives; nothing could be more ſuperfluous, nor leſs to the purpoſe. My confeſſion, my lamentation, that there are but too many ignorant midwives, palpably obviate the neceſſity of proving what is granted. The public would be very little the better for a truth, with which it cannot but be too well acquainted, that there are ignorant midwives, and inſufficient men-practitioners. The truth then, for which I contend, is, that the faults of the midwives, however it may be wiſhed that they could be prevented, are, comparatively ſpeaking, neither ſo likely to exiſt in Nature, nor of that horrid, atrocious kind, that are to be found in the practice of the men-practitioners or inſtrumentarians. There is nothing among the midwives of the puncturing, tearing with cold pinchers, maiming, mangling, pulling limb from limb, diſabling, as muſt be inſeparable in a greater or leſs degree from the uſe of thoſe iron and

ſteel-inſtruments, which are ſo often and ſo unneceſſarily employed.

As to the ſecond objection, of my not making any diſtinction of the capable from the incapable men-practitioners. The reaſon of that is obvious. It reſults from the faireſt compariſon of the two ſexes, in reſpect to midwifery, independent of any ſuch examples as have been produced againſt any particular individuals of that profeſſion in the men. Nature has ſo favored the midwives, that among them the bad ones are evidently an exception to the general rule, of the fitneſs of that ſex for the art: whereas among men, the bad practitioners are, and muſt for ever be, the general rule, and the good ones the exception, if ſo it is, that, in Nature, there can be ſuch an exception: he that makes a practice of uſing inſtruments can hardly be one.

NOTHING however will more conduce to eſtabliſh the natural diſqualification of the men for this art, than a fair conſideration of that capitally eſſential branch of it, the ART of TOUCHING, in order to aſcertain

tain the ſtate of pregnant women, and the difficulties ſo neceſſary to be foreknown in order to be leſſened or avoided. On due prevention often depends the ſaving the life of both mother and child; it cannot then be thought a digreſſion, that I tranſiently give a ſummary account of this great light or guidance to that prevention, even though this work is nothing of a regular treatiſe of the art.

Of Touching.

Conducively to a juſt idea of touching, there ſhould be a juſt foundation laid of a competent knowledge of the fabric of the ſexual parts, of the conformation of the *pelvis*, and of the bones which conſtitute it. There requires no depth of anatomy to know, in general, that the *pelvis* is compoſed of that part of the backbone called the *os ſacrum*, terminated at the bottom by the *coccyx*, of the *ilia*, and the *os pubis*. In the cavity formed by the aſſemblage of theſe bones is the *uterus*, ſuſpended between the bladder and the *inteſtinum rectum*, by four ligaments called broad and round. The two broad ones are a

production of the *peritonæum*, on the ſide of the *vertebræ*, and terminate on each ſide of the uterus near the fallopian tubes. The round iſſue on the ſide of the *fundus uteri*, immediately under the tubes, and from thence paſſing through the *peritonæum*, and croſſing the muſcles of the hypogaſtrium, are inſerted at the pubis and common membrane or integument of the forepart of the thighs. I pretend here nothing further, than to give a ſummary ſketch of theſe parts, a more particularized one being here needleſs. Suffize it to obſerve, that no good midwife can be without a proper and diſtinct conception of their poſition and conformation, not only for touching, but for operating with ſucceſs.

TOUCHING, in the terms of art, conſiſts in the introduction of one or two fingers into the vagina, and thereby into the orifice of the uterus of the perſon, whoſe ſtate or ſituation requires to be known. There ſcarcely needs admoniſhing on this occaſion, a midwife, of the due care of her hands, being properly prepared and guarded from the leaſt danger of hurting. Such a precaution recommends itſelf.

THE

THE touch then is the moſt nice and eſſential point of the art of midwifery. Nor to acquire a ſufficient degree of accuracy in it, can there be too much pains taken, conſidering how much depends on it. Midwives only of great practice, or lying-in hoſpitals, where there is full liberty for the young female practitioners to make obſervations, can render it familiar to the learner. I preſume I may take for granted, that ſuch a practical ſtudy is not extremely decent, nor proper for young lads. And yet, at their ſeaſon of life it is, that this ſtudy ſhould be begun, if but to give expertneſs the neceſſary time to attain, through habit, its full growth, againſt the age of exerciſing the manual function. It muſt ſurely be rather too late, for a man to commence his courſe of touching at the age of practiſing; as it muſt be too ſoon, at a ſeaſon of life, where his capital end of *touching* will probably not be the acquiſition of the ſcience. At whoſe expence then muſt the rudiments of a man's ſtudy of this branch of the art be? ſurely at that of the unfortunate women, ſubject-

ed to the annoyance of ſuch nauſeous and profitleſs viſitation. In ſhort, this is ONE of the points of the art, from the nature of which it may fairly, and without implication of contradiction, be pronounced, that the greateſt anatomiſt in Europe may nevertheleſs be a very indifferent, not to ſay a miſerable man-midwife: or even that a very indifferent anatomiſt may for all that be an excellent manual practitioner.

A MIDWIFE, duly qualified by Nature and art, with a ſhreudneſs and delicacy of the touch, is, when requiſite, capable of giving, in virtue thereof, a juſt account of a woman's condition. She is enabled to make faithful reports to the phyſician, and inform him of the needful concerning the ſtate of his patient, where any co-incidence of pregnancy ſollicits his attention. By the ſame means ſhe can diſtinguiſh the true labor-pains from the falſe ones; and when the term of delivery is at hand, it may, by the touch, be diſcerned, whether the labor will be eaſy or hard, whether the fœtus is well or ill ſituated. With other precognitions, highly neceſſary for our taking proper meaſures both obviative aud actual.

I SAY neceſſary, becauſe it is from this practice of touching that we draw our prognoſtics, both for the prediſpoſition of the paſſage, in order to ſave pain by proper anticipation, and to ſmooth or facilitate a happy delivery. It is then the touch that ſerves us for a guide, and certifies to us the ſituation of the uterus, its rectitude or its obliquity, as well as what part the fœtus preſents.

IT is in ſhort by the information we receive from the touch, that we are enabled in good time to remedy, or at leaſt to leſſen all the obſtacles: ſo that by the very ſame means, by which we obviate any neceſſity of recourſe to inſtruments, we at the ſame time alleviate the pains and ſufferings of the party: which one would think no inconſiderable advantage of the female over the male practice, which laſt is ſo conſtitutionally more rough and more violent.

SUCH is the capital importance of the TOUCH, undeniable, I preſume even by the men-practitioners. But will any of the he-

midwives

midwives then, with thoſe ſpecial delicate ſoft hands of theirs, and their long taper pretty fingers, pretend to vye with the women in the exquiſite ſenſe or faculty of the touch, with which Nature herſelf has ſo palpably indowed and qualified them for the neceſſary ſhreudneſs of diſcernment, that in them it can ſcarcely be deemed an acquiſition of art? If the encroachments however of the male-practitioners proceed, under color of their vaſt ſuperiority, I ſhould not be ſurprized at ſeeing, ere long, a grave ſet of grey-bearded gentlemen-midwives impannelled in lieu of a jury of matrons, on a female convict pleading her belly. What can hinder the redreſs of ſuch a grievance, as the law has authorized for ſo many ages, but the object not being one of a pecuniary enough intereſt to tempt the men to interfere in it? they would be in the wrong however not to apply for the office, ſince it would not be one of the leaſt innocent occaſions for them to improve their hand in the miſtery of *touching*.

But let them pretend what they will, ſo great is the advantage, ſo liberal of her gift

gift has Nature been to women, in that aptitude of theirs, which may be termed a knack of touching, that the hand of a true midwife will, at the deriving of indications from the report of its touch, beat the moſt ſcientific head of a man-practitioner, though ſtuffed never ſo full with Greek and Latin. Yes, an ignorant midwife, without perhaps anatomy enough to know where the *pineal gland* is, or without ſo much as having heard the name of the *oſſa innominata*, and with purely her expertneſs, and with that ſort of knowledge ſhe has at her fingers ends, will give you a more uſeful and practical account of matters, as they go, where it is ſometimes ſo infinitely important to know how they go, than the moſt learned anatomiſt that ever diſſected a corpſe, brandiſhed a forceps, ſtuck a crotchet into a child's brain-pan, or tore open a living woman.

Upon this point of touching there occurs a conſideration, on which I have before juſt tranſiently touched, and beg leave, for the ſake of its importance, to give it ſome expanſion.

In

In my objection to a man's practising this branch of art, TOUCHING, I wave here the natural repugnance all the parties must have to it, even the man-midwife himself, on any footing but of that of interest, allowing an exclusion of any libertine design, I wave especially the argument against it, from its being a kind of invasion of a husband's incommunicable prerogative; I even wave the breach of modesty, I suppose all this to be answered by the plea of superior safety, however false and imaginary that plea may be. But surely it will be allowed me to pity the unfortunate condition of a woman, subjected to so disagreeable a visitation; a visitation which, instead of being performed in the gentle, congenial, and especially, as to the end, satisfactory manner, of which the women alone are capable, must furnish a scene, not only unprofitable, disgustfully coarse, and even ridiculous, but also most probably a very painful one. Figure to yourself that respectable personage a He-midwife, quite as grave and solemn as you please, with a look composed to all that "DELICACY *of* DECORUM," recommended

mended by Dr. Smellie, and ſo ſuitable to the high DIGNITY of the *office* he is undertaking of *touching* the unhappy woman, ſubjected to his pretentions of uſeful diſcovery by it. What muſt not parts, which diſpute exquiſiteneſs of ſenſibility with the eye itſelf, ſuffer from hands, naturally none of the ſofteſt, and perhaps callous with handling iron and ſteel inſtruments, from ſome hands, in ſhort, ſcarce leſs hard than the inſtruments themſelves, boiſterouſly grabbling and rummaging for ſuch nice indications, as their want of fineneſs in the touch muſt for ever refuſe them? what if they may poſſibly, by ſuch coarſe *touching*, find ſome common, obvious ſigns preſenting themſelves, ſo that the groſſeſt touch cannot eſcape diſtinguiſhing them; does it therefore follow, that the nicer points, on which ſo much may depend for preparatory diſpoſal, will not eſcape hands, ſcarce not leſs diſqualified for the neceſſary diſcernment, than a midwife's if ſhe had gloves on? in the mean while, what torture muſt not the poor woman endure, in every ſenſe, from the wounds of modeſty, and even of her perſon? and

for

for what? that the doctor may, with a significant nod, or silent shrug, give himself the false air of being satisfied about what he was pretending to look for; or, if he speaks, come off with some jargon, only the more respectfully received by the patient, for its neither being common sense, nor intelligible to her; or perhaps, if he has any by-ends in view, or is a man of gallantry, here is a fine occasion for his placing a compliment. But for any essential advantage to her, from such a quackery of painful perquisition, she need not expect it. The infinitely important service of prediſposing the passages, and of obviating difficulties, to be only ascertained by that faculty of touching, is palpably and peculiarly appropriated by Nature to the women only; and it is from them alone that a woman must, naturally and truly speaking, be the least shocked at receiving such service. Whereas in being *touched* by a man, besides, I once more say, besides the revoltingness of Nature, and the protest of female modesty against it, besides the pain inseparable from it, besides even its insufficiency; the

ſafety of the woman is deſtroyed to the very foundations, by the negation of due foreknowledge and proper diſpoſal, againſt the actual criſis of danger or the real labor-pains, the mitigation of which, and facilitating the delivery, depend ſo much on the *accuracy* of the *touch*.

WHOEVER then will but conſider that greater aptitude of organization in the women for fineneſs of that ſenſe of touching, will allow, that I beg no queſtion, when I aver, proverbially, but truly ſpeaking, that if one hundred points of qualification were requiſite to conſtitute this capital faculty of TOUCHING, a midwife already poſſeſſes, in the but being a woman, ninety-nine of them, the ſure and certain gift of Nature: and the remaining one from Art, may with great eaſe, with a little inſtruction and experience, be acquired. Whereas, the He-midwife, not only, as not being a woman, wants the whole ninety-nine, but can never receive the hundredth at the hands of Art, but in ſo imperfect a degree, that his truſting it will make it worſe to the unfortunate woman that ſhall truſt him, than if he was wholly without

out it. I might perhaps, not without reaſon, extend this allegation of the ſuperiority of the female ſex over the male in this point, and in the ſame proportion, to the whole of the manual function, but that I am more afraid of exagerating, than even of falling ſhort of the truth.

SURELY then, one might imagine, that the parties principally concerned in liquidating this difference for the government of their deciſion, on a point of ſuch capital importance, would not do amiſs to conſider it, before they ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon in the manner they are by the men-pretenders to a purely female office. An impoſition ſo very groſs, that inſtead of anſwering the end of thoſe on whom it paſſes, that of greater ſafety, only encreaſes the dreaded danger. And moſt aſſuredly, the women who ſubject themſelves to it, do ſo, if with no ſcandal to their modeſty at leaſt to their underſtanding; for being ſunk to ſo low a degree of cheapneſs, as even to purchaſe, with a ſort of proſtitution, innocent let it be, it is ſtill a proſtitution, after which money is a conſideration beneath mention, and to purchaſe what?

danger

danger to their own life, danger to that of the pretious burthen within them, and, at the very leaſt, an increaſe of bodily pain to themſelves.

MR. De la Motte, in his 188th OBSERVATION, p. 265, *Leyden ed.* makes an animadverſion upon a midwife's *touching* a patient, which, unleſs he was induced to it by that ſpirit of injuſtice to midwives in general, againſt which injuſtice all his uſual candor is ſometimes not proof, would perſuade me, that he was more ignorant of the nature and ends of *touching*, than what his works ſhow him to have been in other parts of the profeſſion.

IN that OBSERVATION he gives you the caſe of a woman in labor, to whom he was called, whoſe membranes a midwife had prematurely broke, whom ſhe had actually over-fatigued with making her too often ſhift her poſture, and alſo with inceſſant and reiterated TOUCHINGS (*attouchemens qu'elle reïteroit ſans relâche*) and all this, from a principle of avarice, in order to make the quicker riddance, for the ſake of attending

a richer patient, where ſhe expected greater gain; "as if (ſays Mr. De la Motte, in "words that ought to be engraved in every "practitioner's heart) a poor woman was "more to be neglected than a wealthy one, "in the preſence of a God who judges all "our actions."

FOR my quoting this caſe, eſpecially as it regards the point of TOUCHING now under diſcuſſion, my reaſon, from the conſiderations to which it will give riſe in the reader's own mind, will probably appear ſo ſatisfactory to him, that he will eaſily abſolve me of any charge of digreſſion.

As to the midwife's bringing on the premature diſcharge of the waters, if the fact was true: it was very blameable practice. It is a practice that all capable midwives reprove and forbid, as it is robbing the part of the moſt natural and neceſſary lubrication for facilitating the launch in due time of the fœtus. I have been aſſured, with what truth I cannot well warrant, that the men-practitioners are commonly much too precipitate in the breaking of the membranes.

branes. Be the practitioners then of what ſex they may, ſuch practice is bad.

BUT, as to the motive M. De la Motte attributes to the midwife, of avarice for ſuch a procedure, I ſhould heartily join with him in condemning her, if the mention he makes of the REITERATED TOUCHINGS did not make me ſuſpect not his ſincerity but his knowledge. If the poor midwife had been to write the caſe, I have the charity to think ſhe could, with truth, have given a better reaſon for her practice than a ſuggeſtion of avarice. At the worſt, however, ſo criminal a ſpring of action in ſuch a conjuncture, could only be perſonal to herſelf, not affect the midwives in general. Mr. De la Motte himſelf would own this, who, as the reader may ſee p. 286, does not ſpare the men-practitioners on this head, without meaning, that he or his fraternity ſhould be involved in any ſiniſter inference from thence. And, indeed, I ſhould have a right to laugh at men-practitioners reproaching the midwives with intereſtedneſs. I fancy I can have few readers ſo ignorant, as not to know by which of the two ſexes

the greater fees are expected; which ſex, in ſhort, looks the moſt out of humor, when thoſe ſame fees do not amount to the practitioner's idea of the DECORUM of his "DIGNITY."

BUT let that paſs. I come now to the great point of the TOUCHINGS complained of by M. De la Motte, and I ſincerely believe unjuſtly complained of. My cauſe of ſuch belief is this: I am well grounded in my averring, that in many labors much depends on the rectification of things, (this will be hereafter more at large explained) by the act of touching, not only reiterated, but ſometimes even not to be diſcontinued for hours together. And theſe *touchings* are ſo far from fatiguing, or vexing the patient, that they often prove her greateſt relief from pain, and even preſervation from danger, by the facilitation they procure to the iſſue of the fœtus, that is to ſay, if they are ſkilfully managed.

I HAVE myſelf known women in pain, and even before their labor-pains came on, find, or imagine they found, a mitigation of

of their complaints, by the ſimple application of the midwife's hand; gently chafing or ſtroaking them: a mitigation which, I preſume, they would have been aſhamed to aſk, if they had been weak enough to expect it, from the delicate fiſt of a great-horſe-godmother of a he-midwife, however ſoftened his figure might be by his pocket-night-gown being of flowered callico, or his cap of office tied with pink and ſilver ribbons; for I preſume he would ſcarce, againſt Dr. Smellie's expreſs authority, go about a function of this nature in a full-ſuit, and a tie-wig.

I AM alſo the more ready to believe, that theſe ſame *touchings*, with which M. De la Motte, finds fault had in this caſe been really of ſervice, ſince he confeſſes, he found the child "*well ſituated, and* FAR ADVANCED *in the paſſage*"; and withal offers no reaſon to think, but that it was ſo *far advanced* from the *touchings*, not in ſpite of the *touchings*.

WE ſhall now ſee what followed. Mr. De la Motte, that deſpiſer of midwives;

Mr. De la Motte, who ſo conſiſtently regretted his not being admitted to the Hôtel Dieu at Paris, and accuſes the women, educated at that Hoſpital, of vanity, for valuing themſelves on that education, behaved himſelf on this occaſion, as indeed his merit was that on moſt occaſions he did ſo, like a true good midwife: he found things *far advanced* enough, for him to leave the reſt very wiſely to Nature, and ſo he did. The conſequence of which was, that the patient was ſoon delivered of a fine boy, and both mother and child did well.

SUCH was the reſult of Mr. De la Motte's true midwifely proceeding. But what would an inſtrumentarian have probably done? One of thoſe, I ſay, who, as to all the boaſted improvement of the obſtetrical art, produce the ſtupendous inventions of thoſe ſurely rather weapons of death, than of life, which Dr. Smellie calls his REINFORCEMENTS, and is ſo good as "*principally*" to recommend, "*namely the ſmall forceps, "blunt hook, ſciſſors, and curve crotchets*", the unenviable privilege of uſing which bleſſed ſubſtitutes to the ſoft fingers of women, being ſuppoſed inherent to the men by

by right of ſuperiority of ſkill, has ſo greatly IMPROVED the art of midwifery, and thinned the number of good midwives, by exploding their ſo much leſs painful, and certainly more ſafe method of practice, both for mother and child? For after all, what can ſuch inſtruments be expected to do, but, inſtead of improving the art, to multiply murders? if this ſhould appear too ſevere, hear what Mr. De la Motte himſelf ſays to the very caſe in point: to this very caſe, in which himſelf, I repeat it, did no more than play the part of the good midwife, and was only the more commendable for doing ſo.

"IF the operator of the place had been "called, he would DOUBTLESS have "proceeded in this delivery, as he had "done in the other (ſee p. 292.) that is "to ſay, he would have *quickly* diſpatched "it with his *crotchet*: but on the contrary, "if he had had any experience, he would "have conducted the other delivery as I "did this, and thereby have exempted "himſelf from the reproach he muſt have "made to himſelf, for having killed a

" poor woman in the moſt *cruel* manner."

HAPPY! thrice happy it is for the midwives, that, at leaſt, if avarice ſhould tempt any of them to the injuſtice of hurrying a poor patient's delivery, in order to attend a rich one; a circumſtance which, I fancy however, does not more often occur to the female than to the male-practitioners; the woman cannot, at leaſt, uſe towards precipitating ſuch deliveries means ſo violent as the men. They appear only in guiſe of peaceable ſimple ſeconds to Nature: the men take the field, armed as combatants againſt her. The women can but prematurate things by excitation of the hand; they may be guilty of reprehenſible negligence, they may be over curious in their bandages, by way of ſmoothing wrinkles after delivery; in ſhort, they may commit many faults, which I am far from juſtifying, or even extenuating; but at the very worſt, I defy them to equal the inſtrumentarians in miſchief; nor can their practice abound with thoſe horrors, of which a man-midwife tells us he could furniſh VOLUMES (p. 298.) horrors which muſt

muſt be ſo greatly multiplied ſince his time, as the recourſe to inſtruments is more than ever purſued, in practice, though ſo fallaciouſly diſowned in the theory; under which diſavowal the gentlemen midwives figuratively conceal their bag of hardware, juſt as Dr. Smellie directs them literally to do in their viſits to patients.

But to reſume the ſubject of TOUCHING, I am to obſerve, that among its eſſential ſervices on many occaſions, both during the pregnancy, and in the actual labor-pains, there is one caſe, which, for its frequency and importance, deſerves a ſeparate conſideration: it is that of the obliquity of the uterus, of which touching not only ſerves to inform, but to rectify it. I ſhall therefore dedicate a ſection to the treating of it.

Of the OBLIQUITY of the UTERUS.

By the obliquity of the uterus I mean its untoward ſituation. For either the uterus preſerves its natural direction, or does not preſerve it. Where the uterus preſerves

ſerves it, I call it well placed: the point of it is turned directly to the cavity of the pelvis, and the *fundus uteri* is ſuſpended in the ſpace between the umbilical region and the vertebræ: if the uterus does not preſerve its natural direction, if it inclines too much forwards, backwards, or towards either the right or the left ſide, I call it oblique, or untowardly placed. All the other ſituations of the uterus are reducible to theſe four, from which they differ no otherwiſe than as its line that ſhould naturally be perpendicular to that of the vagina deviates more or leſs from it towards any of them. It is from this obliquity, greater or leſs, that proceeds, by much the moſt often, the greater or the leſs difficulty of the lyings-in.

It would be ſuperfluous here to analiſe all the cauſes of ſuch obliquity, becauſe, being moſtly natural ones, there is no preventing them. But there are ſome cauſes of it, or at leaſt, that appear to me to be ſometimes the cauſes of it, that it cannot be improper for me to premiſe here, for precaution-ſake.

I HAVE then ſome reaſon to think, that both here and in Holland the ſtays contribute much to the obliquity of the uterus. For though women, during their pregnancy, may perhaps wear them looſer than at other times; yet their natural hardneſs preſſing on the belly, with the ſtiff whalebones, always too many if there are any at all, cramp the fœtus and the womb, to which the ſtays too often give a bad ſituation, according to their motion or ſwagging more to one ſide than to the other, in their ſtate of looſeneſs; and if they were laced tighter, that would be yet more dangerous.

I COULD wiſh then, that women with child would either content themſelves with wearing a bodice only, or ſtays without any whalebone, but at the back juſt to ſerve the loins, and even thoſe not to come ſo low down as I have ſeen ſome. The obliquity of the uterus is much rarer in France than it is here, for which I cannot account otherwiſe, than from the women there avoiding any prejudice from their ſtays, during their preg-

pregnancy. There is another cauſe, as I apprehend it, of the lateral byaſs, which is the lying too conſtantly on either ſide, whence the uterus contracts a habit of inclination to that ſide. The probability of ſuch an effect I ſubmit to the anatomiſts, as I ſpeak here only conjecturally, and not with the preſumption of certainty.

THE obliquity of the uterus may be diſcerned from the difficulty there will be, in touching, to come at its orifice. And it is by touching alone that you can hope to diſcover which way its deviation points, whether it is placed too high towards the *os pubis*, too much turned towards the curve of the vertebræ, or in a lateral direction, towards either the right or left *ilion*. But which ever way that miſ-direction points, the difficulty of the delivery is proportionable to the degree of it: and the ſkill and knowledge of the midwife in not only the reduction, but the keeping of the uterus to its due poſition, till the delivery is accompliſhed, form one of thoſe principal branches of the art, for which the gentlemen-midwives muſt be naturally ſo unfit.

THERE

THERE are very few authors who have treated of this obliquity of the uterus. Some do not mention it at all, others ſpeak of it, but ſo ſlightly as to eſcape attention.

DR. Smellie in his enumeration of the caſes, by which laborious labors are occaſioned, which he ranges under ſeven heads, has intirely omitted this caſe of obliquity. He has beſtowed indeed a whole chapter on the diſtortion of the pelvis, a caſe I take to be comparatively infinitely rarer than an obliquity of the uterus. He might as well ſuppoſe a frequent vitious conformation of the cheek-bones, as of thoſe that form the pelvis: which, were it ſo, muſt neceſſarily imply a conſtant recurrence of hard labors in the ſame woman, which is not often the caſe. Whereas the liableneſs of the uterus to an obliquity from various accidents, principally accounts for the eaſineſs of one labor in a woman, being no argument for her not having a hard one in future, or convertibly. I dare aver then, that in the courſe of my practice, which is not the leaſt extenſive one, this very caſe of

of obliquity has occurred to me oftener than all the others put together, and indeed cauſed me the moſt pain to remedy or conquer. Why then ſuch an omiſſion by theſe writers? I cannot conceive, unleſs that they were aware of the conſequence, obvious to be drawn from thence, that women, by the ſuperior fitneſs of their hands, muſt be the propereſt to apply the topical remedy; and that their iron and ſteel inſtruments could not ſo well be ſet to work in ſuch a caſe, at leaſt in due time. This is abſolutely ſo true, that in the caſe of this very obliquity, which occaſions moſt of the very lingering labors, for which the midwives, who have not preventively exerted themſelves to reduce it, and thereby to clear the paſſage for the fœtus, have no remedy but patience; thoſe very lingering labors, I ſay, which ſhall have thus ariſen from the want of ſkill or prevention, furniſh the men-practitioners with a pretence to diſpatch them with their inſtruments. Thus they, often murderouſly for the child, and injuriouſly to the mother, terminate many a delivery, which a gentle and conſtant reduction of the uterus would have ſo much more ſafely and leſs painfully accompliſhed.

And

And how accompliſhed? evidently not by any violence to Nature, but purely by redreſſing the wrong ſhe is in, oftenеſt not by her own fault, but by ſome adventitious cauſe, in which ſhe has been rather a paſſive ſufferer than originally herſelf deficient. A juſtice this of diſtinction too often refuſed her, and from which too many errors of practice ariſe, perhaps in more caſes than this.

However, this is certain, that this caſe of the obliquity of the uterus deſerves much more notice and attention than have been paid to it. It is one of the moſt important difficulties of the art.

He who treats the moſt at large of this matter is Daventer, who, I have ſtrong reaſons for believing, firſt took the hint from ſome midwife: but a hint, which the uſual imperfection of the manual function in men hindered him from duly improving. For in the way he ſets forth the different inclinations of the uterus, and the methods of rectifying them, inſtead of throwing a practical light upon the ſubject, he has obſcured it with errors, abſurdities,

ſurdities, and repetitions without number or excuſe.

But that I may not appear to treat this author dogmatically, and eſpecially as he furniſhes me with an occaſion of further elucidating a point of ſuch great importance to the art of which I am treating, I muſt here intreat the attention of thoſe readers, eſpecially who deign to peruſe me rather in the ſearch of uſeful truth, than of amuſement, of which indeed ſo ſerious a matter is ſo little ſuſceptible.

Let us then examine ſome of Daventer's methods of practice, ſo unconſequential to ſo juſt a theory as that of the miſ-direction incident to the uterus.

Daventer, chap xlvi. p. 288, French edition, treating of the rectification of an obliquity of the uterus fallen forwards, goes on thus. "When the membrane is broke, "and the vertex of the head partly come "forth, there is no longer occaſion to ſup-"port, as before, the orifice of the uterus.

"It

" It ſhould be let fall with the head be-
" yond the curvature of the os ſacrum.
" The head will make its way much more
" eaſily than if it was ſtill wrapped up in
" the uterus (*indeed!*) Now to make the
" fœtus come forth, the midwife muſt, as
" ſhe did at the beginning, employ both
" her hands; the one internally applied,
" the other externally; but take care ſo to
" do judiciouſly. Neither muſt ſhe wait
" till the labor-pains are over, before ſhe
" ſets her hands to work, as I have juſt
" before obſerved. On the contrary, it is
" in the time of the throws that ſhe muſt
" operate, and when they are on the de-
" cline, terminate the delivery. The mid-
" wife therefore ſhould not barely content
" herſelf with watching the time of the
" pains, but ſhould alſo admoniſh, at every
" one of them, her patient to ſecond them
" with all her ſtrength, in order that the
" child may advance the more under their
" ſtronger protruſion. During which, the
" midwife having her hand in the vagi-
" na, the back turned towards the rec-
" tum is to advance the tip of her fingers,
" the moſt ſhe can, under the head of the

" child, taking care however not to over-
" preſs them; and in this poſture, ſhe is
" to keep her hands unmoveable, till ſhe
" feels the labor-pains come on. The o-
" ther hand ſhe is to put on the hypoga-
" ſtrium, nearly over the place anſwering
" to the *fundus uteri*; and when the pains
" ſhall begin, ſhe is to give her hands ſuch
" action, that that which is in the vagina
" ſhall puſh back the coccyx, and the o-
" ther applied externally ſhall puſh up
" gently the *fundus uteri*, and at the ſame
" time determine its orifice towards the
" pelvis. I ſay gently. But this is to be
" underſtood of the beginning of the
" throws, for in proportion as they in-
" creaſe, the midwife muſt preſs the
" harder.

" CARE muſt, in the mean time, be
" taken, that the preſſion made on the bel-
" ly muſt not be too violent but *very* mo-
" derate: whereas that made on the coc-
" cyx muſt be with the midwife's whole
" ſtrength, with this attention however,
" *firſt*, that this great effort muſt not be
" made but when the force of the throws
" obliges the woman ſtrongly to contract
" the

" the muſcles of the hypogaſtrium, and " muſt ceaſe with thoſe throws. *Secondly*, " that the hand muſt be laid flat on the " coccyx, not with the fingers half-bent, " leaſt the joints ſhould hurt the woman. " *Thirdly*, that the hand may be as much " expanded as poſſible, that the preſſion " may be equal on all parts. Obſerving " theſe three conditions, the midwife may " employ her *whole* ſtrength, without *fear* " of doing any harm to the woman. On " the contrary, ſhe will greatly relieve her."

To the which I have to ſay, that I ſhould greatly pity a woman that ſhould fall under the hands of a woman that ſhould receive ſuch directions from Monſieur l'Accoucheur, and much more yet, if ſhe was to be under his. A midwife to operate thus! with one hand in and the other out, over the lower part of the belly, " gently" ſays Daventer, and yet ſtronger in proportion as the throws increaſe: and a little after he ſays, this preſſion on the belly muſt not be too violent, but *very* moderate. I confeſs, I do not underſtand, but that may be my fault, how a preſſion can be ſtronger and

ſtronger as the pains increaſe, without ceaſing to be gentle or very moderate.

BESIDES; as to the preſſion of the midwife's hand on the coccyx of the patient, ſo violent as he adviſes it, with the whole ſtrength of the midwife, can this be executed without cauſing to the vagina or rectum a contuſion, very capable of bringing on a gangrene, of cauſing a mortification, or, in ſhort, the laceration of the frænum labiorum, whatever he may ſay to the contrary?

I OBSERVE, by the way, that in this very chapter Daventer ſuppoſes the heads of children breaking themſelves, ſometimes againſt the os pubis, or the vertebræ, as if theſe were bare bones, at leaſt he is to me, in theſe points, unintelligible.

HE goes on to object, that if, through ignorance, Nature has been ſo far left to herſelf, that the point of the uterus ſhould be fallen into the pelvis, that its orifice, and the head of the child, ſhould be fallen into the lower curve of the *os ſacrum*, that the membrane

membrane ſhould be broke, and the child's head a little diſcovered, and withal, the woman's ſtrength much exhauſted,

" To change, (ſays Daventer) this ſi-
" tuation, thus you muſt proceed. The
" woman muſt reſt upon her knees and
" elbows, with her head low. And what
" (adds he) determines the placing a wo-
" man in this poſture, is, that the weight
" of the uterus may impel it to the ſide
" of the diaphragma, and conſequently
" withdraw it from the ſinuoſity of the
" coccyx."

To me it appears impoſſible, that a woman, whoſe ſtrength ſhall have been exhauſted, or but much diminiſhed, can put herſelf into ſuch a poſture, which could only ſerve to make her loſe any little ſtrength ſhe might have left.

At the end of the ſaid chap. xlvi. Daventer concludes in the following terms.

" However, to ſay the truth, of what-
" ever kind the obliquity of the uterus

" may be, I hold, that the ſafeſt, the
" eaſieſt, and the leaſt painful expedient,
" is the footling-extraction of the child,
" from the very beginning of the labor,
" before or immediately after the diſcharge
" of the waters, as ſoon as one can be aſ-
" ſured that the pains the woman feels are
" the labor-pains. If this method ſhould
" be followed, which I hope (adds he) it
" will one day be, it would preſerve an
" incredible number of women and chil-
" dren, the unhappy victims of a contrary
" practice."

Here I muſt confeſs the ſhallowneſs of my underſtanding. Such a reaſoning as Daventer's in this caſe paſſes my conception. He allows, that in all the obliquities of the uterus, it is extremely difficult to find the orifice, to come at it, and to introduce the fingers into it: nay, he owns, that it is not without a great deal of trouble, that you can get to touch but the ſurface of that orifice; and after that confeſſion, he tells you very gravely that, in ſuch caſes, you muſt deliver the child by the feet, in the very beginning of the labor,

labor, before even the diſcharge of the waters, or at leaſt ſoon after.

OUGHT then the tranſlator of Daventer, who is at the ſame time his apologiſt, in good conſcience, boaſt ſo much the diſcoveries of this author upon the obliquity of the uterus? is it poſſible for common ſenſe to give the approbation that he does to thoſe eaſieſt, ſafeſt, and leaſt painful methods, that he recommends for relieving the mother and child in thoſe caſes of obliquity?

I AM then too much prepared to be ſurprized, in the chapter following that from which I have quoted, to find him, where treating of an uterus too much inclined towards the vertebræ, not ſcruple to reaſon as follows.

" BUT if the child is too much com-
" preſſed, or has a head over large, ſo that
" it is not without much difficulty to the
" midwife, and pain to the woman, that
" it can be hoped to bring the child into
" the pelvis, a ſtate of things which does

" not unfeldom happen, I judge that, to
" prevent the danger, the beſt method is
" the footling-extraction. But (adds our
" author by way of reflexion) this work
" is more *befitting* a *man* than a *woman*,
" unleſs ſhe has a *quick* judgment, and
" an *alert* hand: a man-midwife ſhould
" therefore be called (*Doubtleſs!*) and he
" muſt lay his account with having work
" enough, for it is not without a great
" deal of trouble and difficulty, that he
" will accompliſh the turning the child,
" and that for *three* reaſons.

" THE FIRST. Commonly, the ori-
" fice of the uterus in this ſituation is but
" little open: it muſt be *violently* dilated,
" that is to ſay, in *forcing* Nature, or *doing*
" *violence* to her. Yet this muſt be done
" ſlowly, for too much precipitation would
" cauſe to the woman *very acute pains*.
(*To be ſure, a ſlow violence would not hurt her.*)

" REASON the SECOND. It is not
" more eaſy to penetrate to the bottom
" of the uterus, of which the orifice al-
" ready,

" ready, narrow as it muſt be, is moreo-
" ver occupied by the head of the child,
" than to open the orifice. No wonder
" then, that ſo much trouble and patience
" ſhould be required to get at the child's
" feet.

" THIRDLY, It will be found, that the
" diſtance there is between the orifice of
" the vagina to the bottom of the ute-
" rus, muſt render the *man-midwife's*
" work ſo much the more difficult for
" the ſinuoſity of it, and his being
" forced to operate in a part ſo narrow
" and cloſe, and in which the hand is
" much cramped for room. It is obvious
" to ſenſe, that a place ſo oblique and
" ſtreight muſt deny the liberty of paſ-
" ſage."

THE advice which Daventer gives here of extracting the child by the feet in the caſe he ſuppoſes, and, for that purpoſe, violently to dilate the orifice of the uterus, appears to my weak mind ſuch mad, ſuch frantic doctrine, as to be beneath refutation. The bare recital of his own rea-

ſons,

ſons, and of the difficulties there are to ſurmount, which he himſelf confeſſes, abundantly demonſtrate the impoſſibility and abſurdity of the method he propoſes.

BUT after taking the liberty of diſſenting from that celebrated man-midwife in caſes of obliquity, as to the practical part, which I take indeed to be his *own* diſcovery, it is but juſt I ſhould offer what I conceive to be the true midwife's practice, for terminating happily the labor of a woman in the caſe of obliquity of the uterus: ſubmitting the ſame to better judgment.

ALL the deflexions or byaſſes of the uterus, whatever they are, are to be known by the touch. An expert and knowing hand will never fail of aſcertaining the diſcovery of them. I ſay, an expert and knowing hand, for without an exact knowledge of the figure of the whole pelvis, the ſituation of the bladder, of the rectum, the vagina, and the uterus, before and after pregnancy, the ſituation of the orifice with reſpect to the pelvis, there is no diſtinguiſhing for example, an over-elevated orifice from

from one too low, nor a direct from an oblique one. In vain would one conceive clearly what thoſe terms ſignify, or have ſome knowledge of the diſtinctive parts of the female ſex, without one has at the ſame time ſufficient experience, and fineneſs of ſenſe in the touching part. Without theſe qualifications there is no proceeding but darkling, and in danger of deception.

THE orifice of the uterus is always diametrically oppoſite to the fundus of it. When then you know what the ſituation of the orifice of the uterus is, when in its due place, you may, if well verſed in *touching*, calculate any aberration from the right line, and by the ſituation of the orifice giving that of the fundus, know how the reſt is diſpoſed.

WHEN, by *touching*, I perceive, there is an obliquity of the uterus in the caſe, in the proper time, I deſire the patient to lay on her back, and introducing my finger, endeavour to come at the orifice of the uterus. Upon getting hold of it, I ſupport it ſo long as the labor-throw continues, and

and I take care the child ſhould not engage itſelf too much.

I AM obliged, with my hand, continually to repeat this ſervice; and after reſting a little from the fatigue, whenever I can ſnatch a moment ſafely for ſuch relaxation, I re-introduce my finger, as before, in order to prevent the pains, and hinder the orifice from falling, that is to ſay, from ſinking, ſo as to turn too much backwards, or from riſing too high, or, in ſhort, from deviating towards the right or the left, according to the circumſtances or kinds of inclination that may preſent themſelves. I alſo take great care, that the child may not engage itſelf too far under the os pubis. I do not diſcontinue theſe cares, theſe attentions, until, whatever aſſiduity, length of time, or trouble it may coſt me, I ſhall have arrived at rectifying the wrong direction, by thus conſtantly ſupporting the internal orifice, till, in ſhort, I have brought it, little by little, to turn and come directly on a line with the external orifice. By this management of the hand, I procure the child a fair opening, and its falling forward, without

without being wrapped up or embarraſſed in the uterus.

And yet, in certain caſes of obliquity I ſometimes find ſo great an inverſion of order, ſuch an intanglement, that the child preſents itſelf in the vagina with the body of the uterus covering it wholly, and by its volume totally impeding the coming at the orifice.

I have before obſerved, that I required my patients, in theſe caſes, to lye upon their backs, and this, becauſe, if they ſet up ſtraight, the uterus would overſet, and render the obſtacle, if not invincible, at leaſt, much more hard to remove.

However, both to eaſe my patients, and to prevent the child's ingaging itſelf too far in the pelvis, I get them, according to the circumſtances, to keep ſtill lain down, but to turn ſometimes to one ſide, ſometimes to the other, without ceaſing my attentions, without diſcontinuing to rectify the turn of the internal orifice from over the ſummit of the child's head, and

to

to uphold the ſaid orifice, if it ſhould tend to turn backwards, to depreſs it downward, by a gentle preſſure, if it is inclined to riſe towards the os pubis. This operation, this ſupport, this depreſſion, ought always to be managed with as much tenderneſs as ſkill, and there cannot be too much of both.

CERTAIN it is, that the bad ſituation of the uterus often occaſions a ſevere and difficult labor. A midwife therefore, from the very firſt of the labor-pains, cannot beſtow too much attention to the giving ſuch preventive or actual aid as I have propoſed. Nothing, on theſe occaſions, is more dangerous than delay. The pretious moments of operation muſt not be loſt, leaſt the child, coming to ingage itſelf, ſhould throw us into an imbarraſſment yet greater than the firſt.

IN the beginning of the labor, it is no very great matter, to know exactly, what part the child preſents to the orifice of an oblique uterus. It is enough to know, that it is not the head, in order to determine

you,

you, in due time, to the footling-extraction. What I mean is, that as ſoon as a good poſition ſhall have been procured to the orifice of the uterus; if it is any other part but the head that preſents itſelf at that orifice, and that it is ſufficiently dilated for the hand to get by gentle degrees introduced, dilated, in ſhort, to about the diameter of a crown-piece, then, if the membranes do not break of themſelves, the midwife ſhould pierce them, and ſearch for the feet of the child, to bring it away. But if the head it is that preſents at the orifice, there is no need of any hurry: it is even better to wait till the membranes burſt of themſelves, unleſs they ſhould be come out of the vagina, in which caſe they are to be opened, in order to terminate the delivery, not with ſciſſors, but with the fingers alone.

THE reader will here pleaſe to obſerve, that in theſe caſes of obliquity, almoſt every thing depends, as to the prognoſtication, and prevention of difficulties, as well as to the relief in actual labor, on the exploration of the touch, and conſequently

the

the manual function. The laſt is eſpecially and palpably indiſpenſable. What can ſupply the place of it? not ſurely thoſe forcing medicines, which ſome ignorant men-practitioners obtrude on the unhappy patient, and which only ſerve to exaſperate the pains in vain, and certainly not to accelerate that parturition, which is retarded by the purely local indiſpoſition of the womb. An obſtacle which a ſkillful, tender, experienced hand cannot but be the fitteſt to remove.

In this caſe however it is, that Monſieur l'Accoucheur oftenеſt looks extremely ſilly and diſconcerted. Though the throws redouble, the child is never the nearer coming out. On the contrary, till its paſſage is franked by the reduction of the uterus, it bears in vain upon any part, but that aperture, through which alone lies its iſſue: and, in fact, the harder it bears, the more it obſtructs its own deliverance, and damages its mother. Monſieur l'Accoucheur ſtands by, does nothing, and can do nothing, or worſe than nothing, if he ſhould pretend to it: if he had the head, he has not the hand to give the patient any efficacious

efficacious aid. Then it is, that where thus uncapable by Nature, for the manual function, the men-practitioners abuſe that excellent, that divine, but here miſtimed and miſplaced maxim, of leaving things to Nature, of truſting to Nature. The power of Nature is juſt then, all of a ſudden, acknowledged to be ſelf-ſufficient, when ſhe really wants human help to redreſs her wrong. She is then at her greateſt need, left to ſhift for herſelf. The fruitleſs pangs increaſe. Monſieur l'Accoucheur ſtands by an idle ſpectator, or perhaps goes about his buſineſs. In the mean time both mother and child, exhauſted by fruitleſs efforts, for perhaps four, five, or ſix days, periſh for want of the proper and only relief. Thus the ignorant operators abſtain from interfering, when interfering, if they were fit for it, might be of ſervice, only becauſe they cannot ſo well in this caſe employ their iron or ſteel inſtruments: and as to their hands, they would moſt probably indeed make ſad bungling work of it. Their action, in ſhort, is, if that can be imagined, yet worſe than their inaction.

Some of them, in this caſe, content themſelves with ſaying, that the orifice is as yet too diſtant, and that nothing is urgent. They go away then, and leave the patient in the hope of ſome favorable change which is never to happen, They return, and find a ſtrange diſorder in the ſtate of things, the child is too far engaged: it is too late to retrieve the damage, as they imagine, and I readily believe, when they have lapſed the due time of operation, of which it is not only probable, they knew nothing, but, if they had known what to do, would have done it very ill. Then the vaſt knowledge and learning of theſe diſconcerted inſtrumentarians can furniſh them no better expedient, than that of murdering the child (as they pretend) to ſave the mother, though it is not always that the mother does not follow the fate of her poor infant.

I know, by my own experience, that often to make a happy end of ſuch deliveries, requires an extreme attention and indefatigable pains. But practitioners ſhould reſolve, either to go through with the undertaking

dertaking as it ſhould be, or not begin it, in ſuch caſes, eſpecially where the lives of mother and child depend upon their doing their duty, as they will anſwer the contrary to God, to man, and to themſelves.

THESE caſes are but too frequent in England. I have myſelf met with ſeveral of them, and ſometimes even in perſons extremely well made, in which I have been obliged to perform this manual aid, for many hours together, ay, even for half-a-day and more by the clock; all my motions keeping time with thoſe of Nature narrowly watched, ſo as to rectify and adjuſt the orifice and the uterus; conſtantly reducing any detortion, and keeping things in their due direction. without tiring, or without loſing patience.

HERE I aſk of my reader, is ſuch work as this, naturally ſpeaking, the work of a man, as Daventer would perſuade us?

IF the Monſieur l' Accoucheur is an ignorant, or rather not a very intelligent one

indeed, the mother, or the child, or perhaps both, will probably be his victims.

BUT you say, if he is an intelligent one all will be safe. No; he may perhaps know what to do, but will he have the woman's faculty of acquitting himself of his duty? all the theory in the universe will not do here without the practical part; and will the hands of a man in that respect ever equal the suppleness, the dexterity, the tenderness of a woman's? once more, is a man made for such work?

I SAY nothing here of the patience so remarkable in the true midwife on such trying occasions. I will grant, that Monsieur l' Accoucheur may, in the view of forty, fifty, or a hundred guineas perhaps, have enough of it not to slacken an attendance on his part, so dangerous, so insignificant, and often so pernicious; that it would be much better to pay him for his absence: I grant then, that he may employ his divine hippocratic fingers in such handy-work, for so many hours together, without stepping into the next room for refreshment;

or,

or, in ſhort, without hazarding the lives of the mother and child, by a remiſſion of actual attention and manual aſſiſtence. But granting all this, can any one, who has a reſpect for truth, a reſpect for his own knowledge and ſenſe of things, a reſpect, in ſhort, for two ſuch precious lives, as thoſe of mother and child, not, I may ſay, intuitively, perceive and feel, the impropriety and danger of the practice, in ſuch caſes, being committed to a man preferably to a woman?

But would a woman eſpecially, who loves herſelf, who loves the child in her womb, and who is capable of thinking at all, ſacrifice herſelf and child to ſo palpable an impoſition, as that of the pretended ſuperiority of the men to the women in this point? She cannot even, well, without repugnance, ſubmit, nor but for the indiſpenſable neceſſity probably would ſubmit to receive ſuch ſervice even from one of her own ſex, whoſe tender, ſoothing, congenial ſoftneſs, muſt make it more eaſy and ſupportable. But what can ſhe expect from a man's clumſy, aukward, unnatural, diſguſtful operation, but increaſe of dan-

ger, or of pain, perhaps of both; while she and her child may not improbably be the victims of the rudiments in the art of a man by Nature condemned for ever to be a novice only, and who, for possibly a great hire to assist her, earns it only, as I have before observed, by excluding that due relief he is himself not capable of giving her; earns it by the not preventing enough her pains, and even by increasing her torments; till at length, not unfrequently, some infernal instrument is produced, like the dagger, in the fifth act of a tragedy, and forms the catastrophe of mother, or of child, or of both?

Of the EXTRACTION of the head of the FOETUS, severed from the BODY, and which shall have remained in the UTERUS.

I AGREE with our modern writers, that there can hardly exist a more vexatious accident, than that of the head's remaining in the uterus, after the extraction of the body. There are many causes of this effect. The death of the child for some time past, so that the waters may have had time to relax, to macerate the fibres, and thereby

by to render them incapable of reſiſting any efforts; there will reſult from thence a great difficulty of procuring the total iſſue of the dead fœtus, without diſmembering it.

Some mis-conformation of parts in the mother may alſo contribute to it, or the obliquity of the uterus, where the child is brought away by the feet.

Independently of all theſe cauſes, this accident is almoſt always the effect of unſkilfulneſs; it is, in truth, ſo rare, that it will ſcarce ever happen, where the delivery is conducted by an accurate and able practitioner of the art. If we have ſome examples, that even under ſkilful hands this caſe has come into exiſtence, a thorough examination of it would ſhew, that it was only owing to the cruel neceſſity the practitioner may have been under, of being aided by perſons not duly qualified to afford the leaſt effectual help, or to conceive what they were directed to do.

But, however that may be, the damage is not abſolutely without remedy. The great point is, without loſs of time, to introduce the hand into the uterus, which does not proceed in its contraction, but gradually and leiſurely enough, to give leave for the needful evacuation. It is true, that this operation requires a very nice ſkilful hand; with which, where it is found, ſurely no inſtrument, nor other invention, can come into competition.

This accident has appeared to occaſion ſuch ſevere labors, that many practitioners, and Peu, among others, (page 308) have adviſed abandoning the expulſion to Nature, rather than to fatigue the patient by fruitleſs and torturous attempts, to the ſucceſs of which ſuch obſtacles preſented themſelves, as they looked upon to be unſurmountable.

Mauriceau (Aphor. 240) is of the ſame opinion, which he thus expreſſes. "When the head of the fœtus ſhall have "remained in the uterus, which is no "longer

" longer open enough to give it paſſage " forth, it is better to commit the expul- " ſion to Nature, than to attempt the ex- " traction with too much violence."

THESE practitioners ground their opinion on that Nature, always wiſe and intent on ſelf-preſervation, taking more care to expel a ſuperfluity, than even to attract the needful, often diſcharges herſelf, and that without violence, if ſhe is but ever ſo little aſſiſted, of all extraneous bodies, or other things retained in us againſt her intention.

MESSIEURS de la Motte, Peu, and Viardel adduce examples of Nature's doing ſpontaneouſly, what ſome of our later moderns are for abſolutely doing themſelves by means of thoſe curious inſtruments, in which they make ſuch a parade of the rare inventiveneſs of their genius, particularly in the extraction of a head remaining detached in the uterus, on its contracting ſome hours after the unſkilful operation of ſome deficient practitioners. In ſuch caſes, I ſay, thoſe

thoſe gentlemen furniſh inſtances of Nature's expelling the ſuperfluous and extraneous incumbrance, with only the help of ſome glyſters, and other remedies adminiſtered to the patient.

Now though no one can be more intimately convinced than I am, that Nature, acting for ever upon ſurer principles than Art, poſſeſſes reſources which ſhe often diſplays in the moſt deſperate exigencies; I own, that in this caſe I am not for totally relying upon her beneficence *. Here is a wrong to redreſs, not owing to her, but to deficient practice; and this wrong can hardly be repaired by her alone, unleſs ſomething of a better practice contributes to relieve her. That practice is not, however, the leſs recommendable for being plain and obvious. The moſt gentle, the moſt guarded, but withal the moſt efficacious means muſt be tried, little by little, to inſi-

* It is but fair to obſerve, that M. De la Motte, (Obſ. 248) inſtances, from Peu, two patients periſhing by the midwife's truſting to the pure actings of Nature in this very caſe.

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nuate the fingers and hand into the uterus, how closely contracted soever it may be; for yield it will; and then seize the head by the mouth, the occipital cavity, or whatever other part affords the least slippery hold, without waiting whole hours, as do certain ignorant or negligent practitioners with respect to the after-birth, who give time to the uterus to enter into too strong contraction.

Some authors, and other persons of much that depth of practical merit, having learned solely by the experience of delaying to bring away the after-birth, that, to abandon thus the head of a child remaining in the uterus, was, at the same time, to expose the mother to the highest danger, judged it expedient to have recourse to auxiliary methods. They have therefore employed and directed for this purpose such edge-tools, as instruments and crotchets of different figures, some to incide and separate the bones of the skull; others to bring them away piece-meal, or all together, according as they should find the operation the easiest.

* DYONIS and Mauriceau are of opinion, that the crotchet ſhould be thruſt into the moſt convenient place of the head, ſuch as the mouth, one of the orbits of the eye, or the occipital cavity; after which, you are to endeavour to bring away the head by redoubled efforts. But if the crotchet ſlips, as the head is of a round figure, and may turn like a ball, they direct you to thruſt the crotchet into the hole of the ear, then giving ſome one the handle to hold, you are to ſtrike another crotchet of the ſame figure in the other ear, and ſo pulling with both crotchets at once, extract the head, that is to ſay, if poſſible.

AY, that "*if poſſible*," is well added; for with infinite ſubmiſſion to thoſe very *learned* gentlemen, nothing appears to me more impracticable; and, I fancy, if they had ever made the experiment, they would

* Dyonis in his Treatiſe, book III. ch. 12. Mauriceau, book II. chap. 14.

have

have found it ſo. What a blind operation, with ſuch inſtruments, and in ſuch a place!

GUILLEMEAU (Treat. of Mid. Book II. chap. 17.) remarks, that, in ſuch caſe, you ſhould take the time that the woman has a labor-pain to accompliſh the extraction by this method, that is to ſay, to ſnatch that moment to extract the head, when you BELIEVE you have got faſt hold of it.

BUT if the woman is too badly conformed, Dyonis (Book II. page 287) adviſes the uſe of the edged crotchets to cut the head to pieces, and bring away, by parts, what you could not do whole.

MAURICEAU (Book II. page 287) would have it ſo, that this ſort of crooked knife ſhould have a long handle; and ſays, that Ambroſe Paræus and Guillemeau are for a ſhort one to it. Doctors will diſagree. They all however give their reſpective reaſons, and it is indeed hard to ſay which does not give the worſt.

MR.

Mr. De la Motte, in the like circumſtances, made uſe of a biſtory, or inciſion-knife inſerted in a ſheath, open at both ends; of which he gives the following account. (Obſerv. 259.)

"I introduced, ſaid he, into the uterus, "my left hand, over which I fixed the "head; and with my right, I ſlipped in a "ſheath open at both ends, in which was "an inciſion-knife, that I applied to this "head, and made an opening in it capable "of admitting my fingers. I widened it "afterwards, as much as I thought pro-"per, and ſcooped out a part of the brain; "after which, I got hold ſufficient to bring "away the head, of which the volume "was conſiderably diminiſhed."

Ambrose Paræus (Book of Gener. chap. 33.) tells us he had, to his great regret, a caſe of this ſort fall to his ſhare, the head of a fœtus remaining in the uterus. To extricate himſelf from which, he propoſes much the ſame methods

thods I have deſcribed after Dyonis and Mauriceau; and adviſes, in the ſame caſe, that if they do not ſucceed, recourſe ſhould be had to an inſtrument, called *pied de griffon*, (Griffin's claw) which he ſays he took from the French ſurgery of d'Alechamp. He gives two forms of one, one of two branches, another of four. Theſe inſtruments, both the one and the other, are made on the principle of the *Speculum Matricis* *, of which the uſe is at once, ſo deteſtably cruel, and ſo perfectly unavailing.

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* This inſtrument was once as much in vogue, as can be ſuppoſed of a time, when inſtruments were not ſo common as they are now. But how much torture in vain muſt it have given before it was diſcovered, that "ſo far from anſwering the *ſuppoſed* intention of "it, namely, to extend the bones of the Pelvis; it "can ſerve no other purpoſe than that of *bruiſing* or *in*-"*flaming* the parts of the woman." SMELLIE, p. 296.

Poſſibly the more modern inſtruments, which have ſupplanted this now exploded one, under the notion of improvement, will, in time be found to be liable to as juſt objection. But in the mean while what lives muſt be loſt, what tortures endured, in the experiment! How many will have been the victims, women and children!

The

The Griffin's claw however differs from the *ſpeculum matricis*, in that the latter has its branches elbowing in an angle, and that the former has its branches ſtreight a-top and at bottom, and arched in the middle, and furniſhed with roughneſſes to ſeize and keep hold of the head.

Those who will take the trouble to ſee the delineation of theſe inſtruments, in theſe authors, will, at the very firſt glance of the eye, be convinced of their unſerviceableneſs. So would they be of that of another inſtrument of the like nature, invented ſome years ago, and attributed to a ſurgeon of Rouen, which is compoſed of two crotchets, of which the blades are arched, and their extremities claw-footed.

The horror which theſe means of extraction naturally inſpire, the damage and inconveniences inſeparable from them, notwithſtanding all the improvements pretended to have been made, have engaged ſeveral authors to imagine other leſs dangerous expedients. But before I mention them, I cannot well avoid taking notice of

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a ſuggeſtion of *Celſus*, if but to warn thoſe whom it may concern, not to be too much carried away by the authority of a great *name*.

In ſuch a caſe the method Celſus recommends, is, for one of the robuſteſt men that may be got, to preſs ſtrongly upon the belly of the patient, with his heavy hands, inclining them downwards, ſo that ſuch a preſſure may force out the head that ſhall have remained in the uterus. Is not this a right *learned*, and eſpecially a very tender expedient?

Mauriceau and Amand giving a looſe to their genius have propoſed leſs perilous methods.

The firſt tells us, that it came into his head, in this caſe, that a fillet of ſoft linnen might be made, in from of a ſling, to be ſlipped over the head, and ſo bring it away.

Amand has imagined a ſilk caul, of net work, to wrap the head in. This caul

is to be purſed up by means of a ſtring, that gathers four ribbons faſtened to four oppoſite points of the circumference, or opening of this kind of purſe, by which the head ſo wrapped up is to be extracted.

MR. Walgrave profeſſor at Copenhagen has improved on the firſt ſcheme of a fillet, by ſtitching together the two extremities of a fillet of linnen of about two yards long and four or five inches wide, in which he makes three ſlits lengthways, to ſeize the head more firmly, and hinder the fillet from ſlipping off the rounder parts of it. The figure of it may be ſeen in a Latin work intitled, *Diſſertation upon the ſeparated head of a child, and the different ways of extracting it from the mother's womb.* By Mr. John Voigt, at Gieſſen, 1749.

MONSIEUR Gregoire, man-midwife at Paris, has diſputed with Monſieur Amand the glory of this invention of the caul.

BUT if a reader will deign to conſult his own reflexion, upon even theſe laſt, leſs however injurious means than thoſe of iron

iron and ſteel inſtruments, he will probably conclude, that if it is poſſible to come at the head, ſo as to fix, for example, a caul over it, the ſame liberty of acceſs will ſerve to do all that can be neceſſary to ſecure a ſufficient hold and purchaſe for the naked hand to bring it away, without ſuch aids, as muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe a free play of the hand in the uterus. I own this requires great ſhreudneſs of diſcernment by the touch, great expertneſs, great ſlight of hand and neat conveyance, but theſe are all points of excellence which midwives ſhould be exhorted, encouraged, and even obliged to acquire: for acquire them they may; which is more than the men, generally ſpeaking, ever can, and are therefore ſupplementally obliged to have recourſe to ſuch ſubſtitutes to hands, as thoſe horrid inſtruments or ſilly inventions of theirs, with which, even at the beſt, they can never do ſo well as the women, who underſtand their buſineſs, can do without them.

Let it alſo be here remembered, what I obſerved at the beginning of this ſection, that this caſe of a ſeparated head, I might almoſt ſay, never, no never comes into ex-

iſtence but through ſome previous neglect, error or failure of practice: ſo that ſurely the preventing it muſt be rather, preferable to the neceſſity of remedying it, either with crotchets, fillets, or even with but the hand alone; the truſting to any of which may make practitioners ſo often remiſs, where remiſſneſs can hardly ever be but of bad conſequence, where no fault, in ſhort, can be other than a great one, and for which, the innocent patient it is that muſt moſt commonly be the ſufferer, both in her own perſon, and in that of her child.

Of that labor in which the head of the fœtus remains hitched in the paſſage, the body being entirely come out of the uterus.

It is here to be obſerved that though the body may be intirely free of the uterus, ſome of the cauſes deduced in the precedent ſection, may produce impediments or obſtacles to the iſſue of the head. The head never detaches itſelf from the body but

but in that labor where the feet of the child come out firſt, and are too forcibly hauled by raſh or unſkilful hands, by ſuch in ſhort as do not know how to diſingage or remove the let or obſtacle to the iſſue of the head, with one hand, while with the other they properly ſupport the body of the child. As it is then greatly to be wiſhed that this accident might never happen, I ſhall, to the means I have already indicated for preventing or remedying it, add others coincidently with the deſign of this ſection, to prove the inutility of inſtruments in the caſe of the title prefixed to it. I ſhall then quote the practical tenets of the beſt authors upon this point, together with reflexions, which my own experience and practice have ſuggeſted to me.

MAURICEAU explains this caſe tolerably juſtly, where he treats of the footling-extraction.

" CARE (ſays he) ſhould be taken that " the child ſhould have its face and belly " directly downwards; to prevent, on " their being turned upwards, the head of

" it being, towards the chin, ſtopped by
" the os pubis. If therefore it ſhould not
" be ſo turned, it muſt be put into that
" poſture. This will eaſily be done if, as
" ſoon as you begin drawing the child out
" by the feet, you incline and turn it lit-
" tle by little, in proportion as your ex-
" traction of it proceeds, till its heels bear
" in a direct line with the belly of the
" mother,"

[*Here I muſt beg leave to interrupt Mr. Mauriceau, to obſerve, that it is not enough to have hold of the child's feet to begin turning it: but the breech muſt have come out: then, if it is not well turned, by placing one hand on the belly, and the other on the breech of the child, there will be time enough eaſily to turn it immediately and naturally, neither with too much precipitation, nor yet too leiſurely, not little by little, or by ſlow degrees. This laſt precaution being of no uſe but to flag an operation, in which a delay may be fatal to the child, without any ſervice to the mother, it only keeping her the longer in pain.*]

" THERE are (he goes on) however
" children with ſo large a head, that it
" remains

" remains ſtopped in the paſſage after the " body is intirely got out, notwithſtanding " all the precautions that can be uſed to " avoid it. In this caſe, you muſt not " ſtand amuſing yourſelf with ſo much as " attempting to bring the child away by " the ſhoulders, for ſometimes you will " ſooner part the body from the neck, than " get the child out by this means. But " while ſome other perſon ſhall pull it by " the two feet or beneath the knees," [*here Monſieur Mauriceau is much out : great care ſhould be taken not to have it pulled by any one, but purely to give the body of the child to be ſupported by ſome diſcret perſon, while the delivery proceeds as the author goes on to deſcribe*] " the operator will diſingage little " by little the head from between the " bones of the paſſage, which he may do " by ſliding ſoftly one or two fingers of " his left hand into the mouth of the " child, to diſingage the chin in the firſt " place, and with his right hand, he will " embrace the back of the child's neck, " above the ſhoulders, to draw it after- " wards, with the help of one of the fin- " gers of his left hand, employed, as I " have juſt obſerved, in diſingaging the

" chin. For it is this part which the moſt
" contributes to detain the head in the
" paſſage, whence it cannot be drawn out
" before the chin ſhall have been intirely
" diſingaged. Obſerve alſo, that this is
" to be done with all poſſible diſpatch for
" fear the child ſhould be ſuffocated, as
" would indubitably happen, were he to
" remain any time thus held and ſtopped:
" becauſe the umbilical chord, which will
" have come out, being turned cold, and
" ſtrongly compreſſed by the body or by
" the head of the child, remaining too
" long in the paſſage, the child cannot
" then be kept alive by means of the mo-
" ther's blood, whoſe motion is ſtopped
" in that chord, as well by its cooling
" which coagulates it, as by the compreſ-
" ſion which hinders it from circulating,
" for want of which it is a neceſſity for
" the child to breathe, which he cannot
" do till his head ſhall be intirely out of
" the uterus: therefore when once you
" have begun the extraction of the child,
" you muſt try to procure the total iſſue of
" it as quick as poſſible."

Monsieur Levret, who has wrote for no end on earth but to recommend his *tire-tête*,

tête, ſeizes the occaſion of the foregoing paſſage extracted from Mauriceau to tell us, page 51, of the firſt part of his work.

"MAURICEAU acknowledges here, "that there are children who have the "head ſo large, as for it to remain ſtop-"ped in the paſſage, after the body ſhall "have been wholly got out, notwithſtand-"ing all the precautions that can be taken "to avoid it."

FROM whence this zealous inſtrumentarian draws the following concluſion. "Here (ſays he) is one of thoſe caſes, in "which my *inſtrument* may be of great "ſervice."

THIS concluſion however does not to me at all appear a juſt one.

FIRST, becauſe Mauriceau, after thoſe lines of his, juſt above quoted by Levret, adds immediately the method of practice purſuable in this caſe, to give a good account of it without the help of inſtruments.

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SECONDLY, becauſe we are not at all to be concluded by what any author ſays, any farther than the truth of things bears him out. Mauriceau * might have explained himſelf better: he might have ſaid,

* Even this very Mauriceau allowed, by his brother practitioner M. De la Motte, to have been an excellent man-midwife, is however very juſtly animadverted upon by him for his weakneſs in giving into ſuch nonſenſe, as preſcribing hiſteric medicines by way of haſtening the delivery. His capital receipt was the juice of a Sevile orange in an infuſion of Sena. Let any one imagine, what an effect ſuch a laxative potion muſt have on a woman, commonly rather wanting to have her ſtrength recruited by proper reſtoratives, than diminiſhed by purges, on ſo ſenſeleſs a view. But how many other inſtances might be brought of theſe ſame moſt learned men-midwives, making almoſt as pitiful a figure in the character of phyſicians, as they muſt for ever do in that of manual practitioners of our art! Even the works of Daventer, who has ſuch glimpſes of true theory, prove him not uninfected with a ſpice of quackery. This is generally ſpeaking ſo true of the men-dabblers in practical midwifery, that one would imagine the extention of that meanneſs of theirs, in putting their noſe into ſuch a function, even to their collateral profeſſion, whatever it be, of phyſician, ſurgeon, chemiſt or apothecary, was the revenge of Nature, for the outrages of their pretended art upon her.

that

that, in this caſe, the child ſhould be puſhed back a little into the uterus, to have the freer play for its being more eaſily diſingaged: he might have adviſed, as I have before obſerved, rather a ſafer method of proceeding than what he has done. Mr. Levret himſelf allows this p. 56. Then, ſtill with a view to recommend his forceps, his *tire-tête*, as being abſolutely neceſſary, he continues thus (p. 58.)

" THOUGH every thing ſhould apparently have been done that is above ſet forth, ſtill we are not always ſo happy as to accompliſh the delivery. It ſometimes happens, that we cannot get the head of the child out of the uterus. There are of this two examples in the treatiſe of M. De la Motte, of which I do not think it here out of place to furniſh an extract.

" MR. De la Motte, in his 253d. Obſervation, (goes on M. Levret) relates, that in a caſe in which he was obliged to turn the child, in order the better to finiſh the delivery, he turned it very

" eaſily

" eaſily ; that having brought it out as far
" as to the thighs ..... it being alive, he
" gave its body a half turn, ſo as to put its
" face downwards which it had upwards,
" and that then he continued drawing out
" the child as far as to the ſhoulders and
" neck.

" AFTER that (ſays M. De la Motte)
" I gave it ſome gentle ſhakes, and even
" pulled it pretty hard, and had ſeveral
" tugs at it, to make an end of a delivery
" I had ſo happily begun ; but all was in
" vain. This obliged me, according to
" my uſual method, to put my finger into
" its mouth. I was miſtaken, for what
" I took to be the mouth, I found to be
" the nape of the neck, and that the neck,
" not having followed the motion of
" the body, was twiſted round, and con-
" ſequently the face ſtill remained turned
" upwards, ſo that the chin it was that,
" being hitched at the os pubis, was the ob-
" ſtacle to have been conquered to termi-
" nate the delivery."

Mr. Levret here obſerves, there being a great probability that, when la Motte turned

turned the body of the child, he was pulling it towards him, and that the mother was in a labor-throw: for it is well known, that then the uterus contracts itſelf in all directions round the body it contains: ſhe was then compreſſing exactly the head of the child, which muſt render it immoveable, while he was turning the body. Theſe two co-incidences muſt have contributed to twiſt the neck of the child, conſequently to make it loſe its life. And to clench the misfortune, he gave its little body to be held by the huſband of the mother, while he was puſhing back the head with one hand, and with the other diſengaging the chin. He told the huſband at the ſame time to pull ſoftly; "but "he hauled with ſuch violence, in the "hope of eaſing his wife, that he fell "with a jerk ſix foot off the bed, with "the body of the child, of which the "head had remained in the uterus."

Let us proceed to the ſecond example. This is the fact. M. De la Motte tells us, that he was called to aſſiſt a poor woman in labor, in which ſhe had been linger-

lingering for two days, that this patient was a very little woman, and of about forty five years of age; the arm of a very ſmall child had come out the day before.

" I SLIPPED (ſaid he) my hand along " this little arm, to go in queſt of the feet, " which I preſently found, and after hav- " ing cloſed them together, I brought " them away out of the uterus. The bo- " dy followed till it came to the neck. " The patient being on the edge of the " bed, which was very high from the " ground, and where there was not room " enough left to ſupport the child in pro- " portion as I drew it out, I was obliged " to give it a woman to hold, while I pro- " ceeded gently to diſingage the head " which was ſtopped in the paſſage. This " was no wonder, conſidering the ſtreight- " neſs of it, being correſpondent to the " littleneſs of her ſize; conſidering with- " al the advanced age of the patient, the " length of time ſince the diſcharge of the " waters, during which the uterus being " irritated by the lingeringneſs of the la- " bor, the preſence of the arm in the paſ-

" ſage

" ſage had cauſed an inflammation, conſe-
" quently ſome induration, all theſe join-
" ed to the time that the fœtus had heen
" dead, which as before obſerved was a
" very ſmall creature, were reaſons more
" than ſufficient to manage very tenderly
" with the child, ſo as to bring it away
" whole. This (ſays M. De la Motte)
" induced me to introduce my hand flat
" towards the *frænum labiorum*, and to put
" my middle finger into the child's mouth,
" while my other hand was over its neck.
" My meaſures being thus taken, I deſired
" the midwife, while I ſhould diſingage the
" parts, to pull ſoftly, for fear of an acci-
" dent. But ſhe nevertheleſs, ſenſeleſsly
" and fooliſhly, gave it much ſuch a pull,
" as the woman's huſband I have before
" mentioned. This indeed forced out the
" body of the child, but ſevered from the
" head, which remained in the uterus."

HERE it may be obſerved that Monſieur Levret, by this preamble, on the one hand prepares us for the neceſſity of his inſtrument, by a conſtant ſuppoſition of caſes, in which, notwithſtanding all the precautions

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tions that may be taken, it happens ſometimes (as he ſays) " that it is not poſſible " to terminate happily the delivery, nor " get the child's head out of the uterus ;" to ſupport which opinion he produces the two examples from De la Motte, which I have juſt before quoted.

On the other hand, he owns, as it were, *en paſſant*, that there are means, which he even explains of accompliſhing ſucceſsfully the deliveries, in ſuch labors, by ſolely the operation of the hands, avoiding the faults committed by M. De la Motte, after which, as if thoſe faults were any proof in favor of his inſtrument, he concludes, that, " if through any cauſe whatever, " this caſe was not to be got over, the " child ſhould be given to ſome one " to be held, with the precautions before " ſet forth, and that then the operator " was to proceed with his inſtruments."

In the firſt example we ſee that De la Motte was guilty of three grievous errors. The firſt, in taking the nape of the neck for the mouth : the ſecond, in having taken

taken the time of the mother's throw, in which the uterus muſt have contracted round the neck in all directions, to turn the body of the child, which contributed to twiſt its neck: thirdly, in having given the body of the child to the huſband to hold, with direction to pull it, even tho' he cautioned him to do it gently. He ought rather not to have truſted him with the body at all, or have abſolutely forbid him to make the leaſt motion, his part being only to ſupport it.

In the ſecond example, De la Motte committed no more than the laſt fault, in truſting a midwife, of whom he might not know all the ſtupidity: but this was ſufficient to produce that accident; an accident which it will not even be hard to avoid, with due management, or hands ſkilfully conducted.

With Monſ. Levret's leave (whom I ought to honor, ſince it is from him I have chiefly taken what he has ſaid againſt all inſtruments but his own) I ſhall then

ſay, that it is againſt the laws of candor, or of common ſenſe, to ſeek, from the faults which may be committed in the manual practice, either through ignorance, inadvertence, or want of circumſpection, to infer the neceſſity of inſtruments.

The point here under diſcuſſion turns intirely upon a child extracted by the feet. Now it is extremely rare, that in this caſe, the head does not follow the body. But if, in exception to this general rule, the head ſhould be ſtopped in the paſſage, upon proceeding to diſengage it, with all the proper meaſures and precautions which I have added to thoſe above ſpecified from Mauriceau, the ſole aid of the hands will be full ſufficient to accompliſh the total delivery. But if they were to be ill managed, the riſk would be evidently great of detaching the body from the head; and this would change the caſe from that of the head ſtuck in the paſſage, to the one of the head ſeparated from the body, of which I have treated in the preceding ſection. Without then multiplying caſes without neceſſity, as the reader will eaſily

ſee,

ſee, that the firſt is but the conſequence of a miſ-treatment of the laſt, ſo that, by the ſame rule, the right management of the laſt caſe is a ſure prevention of the firſt, I ſhall only obſerve, that it might be ſhewn, that capable, well-conducted hands are ſufficient to guard againſt both dangers, and ſhewn, even by Monſ. Levret's own confeſſion, which he ſo inconſiſtently contradicts, in favor of his own inſtrument, without offering any thing like a reaſon for ſuch a contradiction.

But if the damage in theſe caſes reſulting from an unſkilful uſe of the hands ſhould be urged againſt me: I anſwer, in the firſt place, that I am not arguing for any thing but what is to be effectuated by good practice: my point, is only to eſtabliſh the ſuperiority of ſkilful hands to the uſe of inſtruments: and in theſe caſes, I aver, that even the damages done by the miſpractice of defective hands, may be better repaired by ſufficient ones, than by a recourſe to inſtruments. How often too are inſtruments uſed by ſuch men-operators, as are to the full as unfit to manage ſuch inſtruments, bad as they are, as ſome

women may be to uſe their hands! But if I could give no better reaſon for the rejection of inſtruments, than the abuſe of them, even by the numbers of ignorant ſuperficial men-practitioners that employ them, I ſhould not expect to be heard; and yet the great argument againſt midwives is the ignorance of a few of them: though that ignorance of theirs could never produce ſuch a multiplicity of horrors, of murders, injuries, tortures of mothers, ſuch mutilations and maſſacres of children, as the deep learning of the inſtrumentarians!

My plea then is much more fair. The reader will be pleaſed to conſider, and decide upon his own reflexions, whether, it is not at leaſt probable, from what has been ſhewn in the caſes of the obliquity of the uterus, of a head ſeparate from the body of the fœtus, or even of that reputed moſt dangerous extremity, the head being hitched in the paſſage, when the whole body ſhall have come out, that every thing may be at leaſt as hopefully attempted with the hands alone, as with thoſe inſtruments, the uſe of which forms the ſole reaſon for

a re-

a recourſe to men-practitioners; tho', well conſidered, nothing could be a ſtronger reaſon againſt ſuch a recourſe than their uſing them. But let us proceed to the next caſe;

When the head of the fœtus preſents itſelf foremoſt, but ſticks in the paſſage.

For this ſection it is, that I have reſerved to treat incidentally and more at large of the objections to be made in general to all inſtruments, and in particular to the principal ones.

Among the ſevere labors, which give much trouble, and exact much patience from all parties, from the patient, the midwife, and all the aſſiſtence, this caſe may challenge a place. It is that, in which the head of the child having preſented itſelf foremoſt, and having ingaged itſelf half way, or thereabouts, in the ſtreight of the bones of the pelvis, and of the orifice of the uterus, the labor-pains remit, languiſh, and the progreſs of the labor becomes ſuſpended. Whether there be any miſ-conformation of the bones of the pel-

vis, or whether (as our practitioners are pleaſed to expreſs it,) the head of the fœtus be too large for the paſſage, or whether, in ſhort, both theſe cauſes concur to the formation of this obſtacle, or exiſt in complication with other circumſtances; it is, in this caſe, we may ſay the head is hitched, ſtuck or ingaged in the paſſage.

Mr. De la Motte, book the 3d. chapter the 20th, deſcribes this ſtate of the fœtus.

" When (ſays he) the head has ſtruck " into the ſtreight of the paſſage which, " at firſt, affords a great deal leſs room " than were to be wiſhed, for its letting " it paſs, the head ingages itſelf as much " forward as poſſible, from the continual " and violent pains the woman ſuffers, " which act upon the child, whoſe head " lengthens and flattens, in ſuch a manner, " to adjuſt and mould itſelf to the paſſage, " that the hairy ſcalp becomes quite tu- " mefied, ſo as to make the head look al- " moſt like a double head, which however " remains ſtuck faſt between the bones,

" with-

" without being able to get out, and only
" ingages itſelf the more the more it ad-
" vances ..... but growing larger as it
" advances, and the aperture which it o-
" bliged to force diminiſhing more and
" more, makes it ſo that the head remains
" at length ſo jammed in, that it cannot be
" drawn out without diminiſhing its vo-
" lume, which (as this author ſays) can-
" not be executed without inſtruments:
" as I was obliged to do, to accompliſh the
" following delivery."

Mr. De la Motte then proceeds to tell us, that he was called to lay the wife of a laborer, the head of whoſe child was hitched in the paſſage. After having well examined the ſtate of the mother and child, and aſcertained as much as it is poſſible to aſcertain the death of the latter—— " I
" determined, (ſays he) to finiſh the deli-
" very, which I did by opening the head
" of the child with my inciſion-knife, and
" ſcooped out therewith part of the brain.
" After which, I made uſe of my hand,
" with which I got hold of the inſide of
" the ſkull, and in an inſtant drew the

" child out, who appeared to have been
" dead a long time."

It is not here that, in anſwer to M. De la Motte, I ſhall ſtop to propoſe a more gentle and more natural method of giving a good account of this caſe of a hitched head, than the cruel and dangerous expedients ſuggeſted by the inſtrumentarians: I reſerve the ſubmiſſion to better judgment of my own ideas of practice, in this point, till after I ſhall have quoted the notions of more authors.

Daventer, p. 343, of his obſervations, ſuppoſes to us the caſe of a head ſtuck in the paſſage, when the difficulty of the labor ſhall have been increaſed, as well by the ignorance, as by the negligence of the practitioner, male or female, that may not have given the proper aid in due time, or not have foreſeen the danger; he moreover ſuppoſes a complication of obliquity, cauſed by the miſconformation of the bones in the patient. If this embarraſſment then ſhould not have been foreſeen or guarded againſt, he adviſes the opening of the head of the child.

" There

"THERE is, for this no occaſion (ſays "he) for any inſtruments of a particular "make; a common knife guarded as far "as the point, a pair of ſciſſors, a point-"ed ſpatula do the buſineſs. The open-"ing they make may be dilated with the "fingers, and the brain taken out; after "which, you ſeize the head with your "hand, or with a linnen cloth, and try, "in this manner, to bring away the body. "When I ſay you may draw the head out "with a linnen cloth, I mean a broad ſtrip "or fillet cut lengthways of the cloth, "and hemmed in the borders, or any "piece of linnen that is fine and ſtrong, "to be paſſed round the back of the head, "and bringing in under the chin, you "twiſt the fillet, and draw out the child." —— He then adds, that he much eſteems this method; that thoſe, whoſe hands are *ſmall* enough to paſs this linnen round the back of the head, without opening it, are not obliged to open it, and have therein a great advantage over others.

THIS

This laſt method propoſed by Daventer ought doubtleſs to be preferably purſued, as being the leſs cruel. But, in the firſt place, it is utterly impracticable. A head repreſented to be hitched or jammed, does not leave the leaſt hands that can be imagined room or liberty to paſs a fillet round the back of the head, in order to bring it under the chin. But were it even practicable, it would be uſeleſs, and dangerous: uſeleſs, in that the hands alone, ſo introduced, might of themſelves, little by little, diſingage this head; dangerous, for that this fillet might moſt likely produce the effect that fillets commonly do, ſtrangle the child.

Mauriceau, to conquer this obſtacle of the head ſo ſtuck, propoſes ſeveral kinds of crotchets, to apply various ways, to the head of the child, after having ſcooped out the brain, by means of an opening made in the ſcull. He gives us ſeveral examples in his obſervations, but as they are abſolutely fit for nothing but to inſpire horror, I ſhall refrain from ſpecifying them.

them. Dyonis is of the ſame opinion with Mauriceau.

THOSE who will give themſelves the trouble to peruſe the authors who have preceded thus, will find, that their method differs very little from that of la Motte and Mauriceau, which moſt aſſuredly kills the child if it is not dead: and the aſcertainment of the death of a child ſtuck in the paſſage is ſo difficult, that the ableſt practitioners cannot anſwer for not being miſtaken in it. The reader will pleaſe to apply here what I ſet forth, p. 139, and following, to which I beg leave to refer.

MAURICEAU, at length, imagined, that he had out-done all others, in his invention of an inſtrument he calls a *tire-tête*. He ſpecifies it in his 26th obſervation. But it is as dangerous as the crotchets, ſince, in order to uſe it, you muſt begin by opening the ſkull with an inciſion-knife, or with a ſort of ſteel ſpike, double-edged, which he invented on purpoſe for the uſe of piercing the child's ſcull at the *fontanelle*, to admit a little round plate of ſteel of another inſtrument.

MON-

MONSIEUR Soumain, and other celebrated practitioners, have acknowledged the insufficiency of this instrument of Mauriceau; but were it good for any thing, as to drawing out the head so stuck, it would for ever be fatal to those poor unfortunates, since it could not fail of killing them if they were still alive.

AFTER this we have the tire-tête of Mr. Fried, but it is as murderous as that of Mauriceau, nor answers the intentions which its author had proposed to himself. He has therefore himself had the candor to condemn it, as may be seen p. 154. in a treatise of midwifery, published in 1746, by the care of Mr. Boëhmer, who has added two dissertations to the treatise on this art by Dr. Manningham.

MR. Menard, in his preface, p. 24, gives the figure of an instrument, of which the idea seems to have been taken from a twibill, with a ducks beak. Mr. Menard has endeavoured at perfecting it, by having it made angular, shortened, and groov-

ed.

ed. He has given it a figure of dented pinchers, with curve claws. He gives us alſo the figure of an inſtrument pointed and edged, made like the head of a ſpear, which he uſes for opening the ſcull, and introducing the pinchers, by means of which he draws the child out by the head, as he keeps pinching the bones of the ſcull and teguments. By this it is eaſy to conceive, that this inſtrument has no advantage over that of Mauriceau, and has all its inconveniences.

MANY other modern practitioners adviſe the uſe of one or two crotchets, be the child dead or alive, or of a tire-tête, made in form of ſtrait blades, with ſpoon-bills, to introduce them one after another into the uterus; and after having placed them on each ſide of the child's head, and made them meet togethet, to try the extraction with them.

THIS laſt contrivance, as ingenious as it may appear, does not ſave the child's life, as all theſe authors would inſinuate. For theſe inſtruments, wherever they are applied,

ed, muſt pierce to get a ſolid hold; without which they could ſerve for nothing but to cruſh or lacerate the teguments; ſo that they ſhould not be uſed where the child is a live one: and even when it's dead, the mother is not abſolutely ſafe from the damage they may do, whatever precaution the operator may take, or whatever may be his dexterity of hand. If one of the blades ſhould ſlip, which frequently happens, it will be difficult for him not to do the mother a miſchief. For as to the child, it is very rare that the crotchet does not inſtantly deſtroy it.

MENARD has again given us another figure of an inſtrument, to appearence leſs dangerous; but the make of it ſufficiently denotes its want of power in the operation, which is alſo confirmed by the teſtimony of the moſt celebrated practitioners.

IT is now (1760) about forty years ago, that Palfin, a ſurgeon of Ghent in Flanders, and demonſtrator of anatomy in the ſame town, went to Paris, and there preſented to the academy of ſciences an inſtrument

ment for extracting, by the head, children ſtuck in the paſſage. Gilles le Doux, ſurgeon of the town of Ypres, put in his claim to the invention of this curious inſtrument, which has however been ever looked upon as inſufficient, and to have too much bulge, to allow its introduction into a place already ſo difficult by its being blocked up with the body that requires the extraction. After at leaſt a dozen of corrections of this pretended tire-tête or forceps of Palfin, Gilles le Doux himſelf corrected it, ſo did afterwards Meſſieurs Petit, Gregoire, Soumain, Duſſé, and I do not know how many more.

In ſhort, one may ſay, that never did any inſtrument undergo more alterations than this forceps has done. One of the greateſt improvements, according to the opinion at the time here in England, which it received, was that given it by Dr. Chamberlain. Chapman, whoſe treatiſe on midwifery is eſteemed, to give this tire-tête the greater luſtre, tells us, that Dr. Chamberlain kept this inſtrument a long while a ſecret; and that the Dr's father, his

his two brothers, and himſelf, uſed it with good ſucceſs. Mr. Boëhmer, public profeſſor of phyſic and anatomy at Hall, in the Lower Saxony, in the College Royal of Frederic, and of the ſociety of curious Naturaliſts, from whom I quote this, calls this inſtrument, I am here ſpeaking of, the Engliſh tire-tête, or forceps.

ALL due honor be to the original author of this ſublime invention of the forceps, whoever was the happy mortal! happy, I ſay, according to Dr. Smellie, who calls it a "*fortunate contrivance*" *; though perhaps by fortunate, he rather means its having been ſo to himſelf. For hitherto, in all truth, I muſt own, that I do not find, even by the moſt exagerated accounts of the learned men-midwives, that thoſe poor inſtruments of God's making, the womens fingers, would not much better, and much ſafer, do every thing that is pretended to be done by that ſame boaſted inſtrument, or that can be done by any other human means.

* Page 249, of his treatiſe of midwifery.

BUT

But let us ſuppoſe for an inſtant, what both my love and knowledge of the truth would hinder me from granting, that inſtruments are at ſome times, and in ſome ſort neceſſary: in what caſe is it that they are neceſſary? this is what hitherto I do not know. And which inſtrument is it that a man-midwife muſt uſe? that is what I yet know leſs: nor do I believe there is any practitioner ſo preſumptuouſly ſilly, as to admit any particular one, as the only one univerſally received and approved. It will perhaps be ſaid, that according to the circumſtances, each practitioner will, out of his bag of hard-ware, pick out that which will be fit for the occaſion. But then, a waggon would not carry their whole armory, to calculate not only according to the various alterations made, if but in the forceps, by whim, deſire of getting a name, or of encreaſing practice, but according to the various exigencies and circumſtances to which the form of the inſtrument ought to be peculiarly adjuſted. And upon every occaſion, there is not the time for inventing, direc-

ting, or making a new inſtrument. But if it is ſaid, that for want of ſuch exactneſs, the general make of an inſtrument muſt do, in *all* caſes: that general make is not at leaſt to be looked for in any of the kinds I have already quoted, by which ſuch numbers of women and children muſt have been tortured or ſacrificed, before they were exploded and given up, as good for nothing or inſufficient, even by the men-practitioners themſelves, who however ſubtituted no others to them but what were rarely leſs exceptionable. They were only newer. Let us then now proceed to paſs in a ſummary review the later and pretended improvements of this prodigious invention of the forceps, and candidly examine the validity of their claim over the womens hands.

Mr. Rathlaw, a famous ſurgeon of Holland, in his diſſertation on the means, or ſecret of Roger Roonhuyſen, which was tranſmitted to his heirs, for extracting (as was ſaid) in a very little time, a child, whoſe head ſhould be embarraſſed in the neck of the uterus, ſays thus,

"To

" To me it appeared impoſſible, to eſ-
" tabliſh an inſtrument, whoſe uſe ſhould
" be ſo certain, ſo general, ſo neceſſary,
" that one could not be a man-midwife
" without having a knowledge of it."

THE ſame Mr. Rathlaw, in the ſame piece, exclaiming againſt the uſe of the crotchets has this remark.

" No one (ſays he) can be ignorant of
" it's being no longer the practice in
" France, or in England, to employ
" crotchets, or murderous tire-têtes *(would*
" *this were truth!)* in the deliveries, unleſs
" for a monſtrous or hydrocephalous head,
" when the bulk of it is ſo enormous,
" that there is no poſſibility of getting it
" out whole, and eſpecially if the child
" ſhould be dead ..... In my time,
" (adds this author) every eminent man-
" midwife had invented different means
" of extricating himſelf out of the plunge
" of ſuch a caſe, and their reputation grew
" in proportion to their reſpective ſucceſs.
" Yet, hitherto, I do not know, that either

" at Paris or at London, they have got
" ſuch a length, as to take any particular
" inſtrument under their protection. Nine
" years ago, (Mr. Rathlaw continues) I
" had made a forceps almoſt wholly of my
" own invention to extract the fœtus by
" the head, and it often ſucceeded well
" with me. It was, as to its make, a
" good deal reſembling that which Butter
" deſcribes in the Edinburgh-acts, volume
" III. art. 20. But mine (proceeds he)
" ſeem to poſſeſs better proportions, and
" is certainly of a more handy uſe, than
" thoſe which have hitherto appeared."

PLEASE to obſerve, that this forceps of Mr. Rathlaw is the ſame as Palfin's, or rather as that of Gilles le Doux, excepting only the ſemilunar hollow cuts in the claws, which Monſieur Duſſé, a ſurgeon of Paris, had contrived in them. The author ſays, it had *often* ſucceeded well with him: he does not ſay *always*, and why? moſt probably becauſe, when he did ſo *often* find it of ſervice, that was, only whenever there was no ſort of occaſion for uſing it at all. Do not let it here be imagined, that I force

an

an inference. I give my reaſon. Suppoſing that ſuch an inſtrument was neceſſary to every practitioner, the caſe for his uſing it cannot but rarely occur. Now thoſe rare caſes where Rathlaw judged his forceps neceſſary, and in which it failed him, were in all likelihood the true teſts of its merit: whereas thoſe other caſes, in which he *often* ſucceeded, may very well be taken for ſuch as, with hands and patience, might have afforded a better account of them, than the ſilly ſuperfluous quackery of employing a forceps, unleſs indeed his hands were too clumſy to attempt it. Otherwiſe the uſing inſtruments, where they ſometimes do the work with ſo much more pain and danger, when the bare hands well conducted would do ſo much better, remind me naturally enough of what I have ſeen a pretty maſter do with a ſteel-inſtrument called a zig-zag or fruit-tongs, when, to diſplay it, or out of wantonneſs, he has catched up fruit with it, that lay fully within the reach of his hand. In this piece of childiſhneſs there is however no miſchief; whereas the man-midwife, for conſiderations of lucre, dallies with two lives to pluck at a fruit that is never, I repeat it,

never, out of reach of the hand, where that ſteel-inſtrument of his, a forceps, can bring it away.

Mr. Rathlaw alſo tells us of another inſtrument, of which he gives us an account. He had got the ſecret from one Velſen, a phyſician at the Hague. This Velſen had it of Vanderſwam, who had been a pupil of Roonhuyſen, the inventor of this pretended noſtrum, with which he always helped the women in labor, ſnug under the bedcloaths, the better to conceal his miraculous ſecret. He had long promiſed his pupil to diſcover it to him.

" In ſhort (ſays Mr. Rathlaw) one day " that Roonhuyſen was returning from lay- " ing a woman, a burgomaſter of Am- " ſterdam came to ſpeak with him: in " the hurry Roonhuyſen was to receive " him, he hid his noſtrum-inſtrument in " ſome apartment. His curious pupil " (Vanderſwam) who had for ſeveral years " been watching ſuch an occaſion with great " eagerneſs, found it, and took a draught " of it. This inſtrument was in a caſe

" with

" with two long ſteel crotchets, and a " piece of whale-bone, in the ſhape of a " pipe for ſmoaking, only ſhorter, and at " one of the ends of which was a piece " of ſteel, of the ſhape of an acorn, and " there was no other inſtrument in this " caſe."

If Mr. Velſen is to be believed, it ſeems, on the one hand, that Roonhuyſen made the whole ſcience of midwifery conſiſt in the knowledge and uſe of this his inſtrument, ſince it is there ſaid, that Roonhuyſen had promiſed this pupil of his to teach him the art of midwifery, but taught him nothing of it; and indeed it does not appear, that he had hidden any thing from Vanderſwam but this wonderful inſtrument, with which he uſed, under the bed-cloaths, to ſmuggle the child through the difficult paſſage *.

* That is to ſay, if he touched the woman at all with it, and did not ſometimes, at leaſt, *make believe* that he delivered her with it though Nature alone ſhould have done the work. Sure I am that that piece of quackery in him of pretending to hide the inſtrument, might juſtify ſuch a ſuſpicion, of a leſs guilt however than that of really applying an inſtrument inſignificant to any purpoſe but that of torture in vain.

On the other hand again, it may be judged, that this pretended marvellous inſtrument was not of effectual enough ſervice to its inventor, unleſs in thoſe caſes where he might as well have done without them, ſince this very ſame Roonhuyſen made uſe of crotchets, doubtleſs, when he found his inſtrument fail him. O women! women! thus it is that your pretious lives, and that of your children (to ſay nothing of the additional tortures you are put to, as if thoſe of Nature's own ordering were not already enough) are trifled with, in practices being tried upon you with ſuch inſtruments, for which you are beſides to pay exorbitantly; and all for what? To encreaſe the practice of ſome quack, who raiſes into notice his worthleſs name, or perhaps ſwells ſome work of his, publiſhed by way of advertiſing himſelf, with the rare boaſt of having delivered you with an inſtrument, that has only, not murdered ſome of you, though it may ſometimes perhaps have done you irreparable damage, and will have always occaſioned you an unneceſſary increaſe of pain

and

and danger. Is it poſſible to inculcate this truth too often or too ſtrongly to you?

"THERE are many people, (adds Mr. "Rathlaw) who make a doubt whether "this inſtrument is not the ſame as that "with which the three Chamberlains, "brothers, acquired in Ireland and other "countries the reputation of being the "moſt eminent men-midwives in the "world. In thoſe circumſtances in which "others employed crotchets, they could, "by their manual operation, and with leſs "labor, haſten the delivery of the women "in leſs time, and without the leaſt dan-"ger to mother and child."

I AM not unwilling to believe that the three brothers, the Chamberlains, might paſs for the moſt eminent men-midwives in the world, eſpecially in Ireland, where before there never had, as I underſtand, been ſeen any practitioners of midwifery but women. As to other countries, theſe brothers might very eaſily ſurpaſs in ſkill thoſe, who knew no gentler way of terminating a delivery than by the means of crotchets.

crotchets. Therefore it is that our author adds, that the Chamberlains only made uſe of the manual operation; he does not add of other inſtruments. It is a great pity however, that the ſurgeons of all countries have not yet got hold of, and adopted this marvellous ſecret of Roonheyſen's, which would extricate them ſo glorioufly, in their attendance on ſuch difficult labors. They would thereby greatly reduce their armory, from its complex ſtate at preſent of variety of crotchets, tire-tête, forceps, ſpoons, blunt hooks, pinchers, fillets, lacs, ſciſſors, inciſion-knives, and the reſt of their tremendous apparatus.

ACCORDING then to Mr. Rathlaw, the forceps of Roonheyſen was the ſame as that of the Chamberlains. How he got the ſecret from them matters not. He only changed the figure of the blade-parts. In ſhort, our author adds, that to him it ſeems probable, that this inſtrument has been brought to perfection by the continual experience of men-midwives, who have ſucceſſively employed it. He pretends himſelf to have made ſome alterations in it for the

the better; but what they are he is not pleaſed to tells us.

THE illuſtrious Janckius, a great practitioner, mentions another corrected forceps in his diſſertation upon the forceps and pinchers, inſtruments invented by Bingius, a ſurgeon of Copenhagen, and of their uſe in difficult labors, printed at Leipſic, 1750, page 211. This forceps reſembles moſtly that which the celebrated Monſieur Gregoire, ſenior, firſt imagined upon the model of Palfin's tire-tête.

" Janckius, in the ſame diſſertation, " tell us, that it would be of ſervice to " have ſpoons or blades of the forceps of " various curvatures, and of different " lengths, for the ſhorter the arching, and " more crooked the blades or ſpoons are, " the more difficult and dangerous will the " application be, according to Chapman " and Boëhmer."

THENCE this conſequence ſeems derivable, that to obviate theſe difficulties and dangers, it would be requiſite to have as many

many crooked ſpoons as there are particular caſes, as well as to take meaſure of the heads that are ſtuck, which ſtill would imply the introduction of the hand, and, of courſe, the uſeleſſneſs of inſtruments.

MR. Levret, in his notes, p. 377, makes us obſerve, that the branches of the forceps of Bingius, which are ſolid, being conſiderably more crooked than the windowed forceps, the expanſion of their middle part muſt be too wide not to riſque, in the extraction, the *tearing* the perinæum, which it is no ſuch *indifferent* matter as not to be remarked.

THIS Janckius had, it ſeems, that bad habit of employing too *ſoon* the inſtrument of Bingius, which is extremely dangerous. This however, is not ſeldom the caſe, when Monſieur l' Accoucheur is in a hurry.

BOEHMER, in a diſſertation on this ſubject, thus expreſſes himſelf, as to the inſtrument of Levret, and the forceps of Bingius.

" I ſhall

" I ſhall only obſerve (ſays that learned
" phyſician) what Mr. Levret has him-
" ſelf very juſtly remarked, that the appli-
" cation of the forceps is dangerous, unleſs
" the head ſhould have already deſcended
" low enough into the pelvis for the ori-
" fice of the uterus to be effaced, and to
" make but one and the ſame cavity with
" the vagina. This counſel is eſſential for
" two reaſons ;

" FIRST, for fear of hurting the orifice
" of the uterus which might eaſily happen
" without this precaution.

" SECONDLY, on account of the inſtru-
" ment itſelf, the blades of which could
" not embrace more than a part, and not
" the whole of the head, which remain-
" ing too high, they could not conſequent-
" ly compreſs it equally, nor extract it.
" It is for the ſame reaſons (continues he)
" that I rather differ in opinion from the
" celebrated Janckius, who, as ſoon as the
" waters are diſcharged, and he perceives
" that the head does not paſs, has inſtant-

ly,

" ly recourſe to the inſtrument . . . Some
" time (ſays he) ſhould be indulged to the
" action of Nature . . . . . There is often
" more ſucceſs obtained by temporiſing,
" than by too early a recourſe to inſtru-
" ments."

LITTLE by little the truth will come out. Little by little, even the men-practitioners themſelves, will be forced to allow, that the very leaſt imperfect of the inſtruments are prejudicial and dangerous: though perhaps they will not ſpeak out the whole truth, and confeſs that total uſeleſſneſs, which would, in ſo great a meaſure, imply their own. But common-ſenſe will inform whoever conſults the light of it within himſelf, that theſe inſtruments are of a nature ſo heterogeneous, from the ſervice expected from them, ſo impoſſible to be adapted to the infinitely tender texture of the organ of geſtation, that the very beſt of them muſt occaſion lacerations, eſpecially by the opening of the branches, the ſtrain of which bears upon the mother's body, and can never but hurt the child, in cruſhing it's head;

as

as they make that to be done precipitately, about which Nature has, for taking her own longer time, no doubt a very good reaſon, if there was no more than that one of gradually dilating the paſſage; but there are probably many others.

ART ſhould aim at imitating Nature: now Nature proceeds leiſurely, inſtead of which the forceps goes too quick to work. The action of it depends on an artificial compreſſion, which begins by moulding, or rather cruſhing the child's head, adaptingly to the figure of the pelvis, to facilitate its extraction; and though the divine providence has in its wiſdom provided for the preſervation of the human ſpecies, by means of what is called the duramater, and by the void of the ſutures in the cranium of children, the manual compreſſion of the inſtrument is either too ſtrong or too weak. If too ſtroug, the child is loſt; the head being ſo compreſſed by the inſtrument, that the brain eſcapes through the occipital cavity: if it is too weak, ſo that the head has not been ſufficiently compreſſed, nor it's bulk competently diminiſhed, in attemping

tempting the extraction, not only the uterus can ſcarce eſcape the being wounded, but the perinæum and the bladder the being torn: and indeed in either caſe they hardly eſcape, the inſtruments occaſioning various inflammations and contuſions, of the worſt conſequence, both in the internal and external parts, beſides the great danger of the blades ſlipping and violently hurting the mother, not to mention the painful divarications and ſhocking attitudes in order to the introduction.

THE inſtrument uſed by Mr. Giffard, man-midwife, is ſuppoſed by Levret and others to be nothing more than the windowed forceps, of which the uſe had been long before known. But that appears as unſatisfactory as others. Mr. Freke too, it ſeems, furniſhed a new kind of corrected forceps, the chief merit pretended of which was, that the extremity of one of the blades was curved in form of a crotchet, and that this extremity might be *concealed* when not employed as a crotchet, and conſequently helped to avoid the having a multiplicity of inſtruments, as this new-fangled

gled one might, upon an occaſion, ſerve either for crotchet or forceps. — What a prodigious ſtrain of ſublime invention is this of death and wounds in various ſhapes!

I FIND too that Chapman is blamed, for that, in his eſſay on the art of midwifery, he very frankly condemns all the tire-têtes he had ſeen employed till his time by all other practitioners, but he has not, it ſeems, given a deſcription of the one he himſelf uſed, nor doubtleſs the method of uſing it, the one neceſſarily depending on the other. Nor where that author ſpeaks of paſſing a ribbon over the head of a child, is he ſo good as to tell you how he managed to get it over.

I MUST not here omit ſome mention of the forceps, pretended to be improved by Dr. Smellie. Upon which, however, I ſhall ſpare the reader a tedious minute diſcuſſion of its form, and of its advantages and diſadvantages, comparatively to other forceps calculated for the ſame uſe. Levret may to the curious furniſh ſufficient ſatisfaction on that head. He has examined it with great exactneſs and ſeeming

candor, even though he prefers his own to it. Nothing can be plainer, than its being juſt as inſignificant and fooliſh a gimcrack as any of the reſt. But there is one particularity, of which Levret takes notice, that I cannot well omit mentioning. The Dr. has, it ſeems, whether to ſpare the women the ſhock of the gleam from a poliſhed ſteel inſtrument, or, whether to defend them from the injury of that metalline chill, which is not well to be cured by any warming at the fire, covered his inſtrument with leather ſpirally wound round it. Levret upon this concludes his remarks with the following one. " The ledges or roughneſs which " the leather muſt, *beſides increaſing its bulk*, " create by thoſe its ſpiral circumvoluti- " ons, cannot but be ſuch an obſtacle to " the introduction of the inſtrument, " as to let it be ſerviceable only in " thoſe caſes where (N. B.) — one may " do *very well without* it. For it is well " known, than in thoſe caſes where re- " courſe to it is requiſite, the moſt po- " liſhed, the moſt ſmooth inſtrument of- " ten finds ſuch great difficulties in its " intromiſſion, that nothing but a hand, " *conſummately* expert in the uſe of this " inſtru-

" inſtrument * can, without damage, re-
" move the impediments."

Dr. Smellie has, however, himſelf ſalved one of Levret's objections to his inſtrument, as to any offenſive ſmell or infection that might be contracted by the uſe of it. (Treatiſe of Mid. p. 291.) The " blades of the forceps ought to be *new* " *covered* with ſtripes of *waſhed* leather, " after they ſhall have been uſed, eſpeci-" ally in delivering a woman ſuſpected " of having an *infectious* diſtemper." Certainly, certainly, not only the Doctor's nine hundred pupils, but all other practitioners, that uſe this famous inſtrument, will do well to obſerve this injunction. It is the very beſt thing they can do, next to never uſing it at all.

I come now to the boaſted inſtrument of Levret; who is the laſt, at leaſt that I know of, who has invented a new make of a tire-tête, or forceps corrected, over

* How few are there ſuch? conſequently how great the danger of ſuch inſtruments, even if they were good for any thing, to be introduced into *common* practice?

all that have appeared ſince Palfin. He gives us, in a book written on purpoſe to recommend it, a minute analyſis of it, and an ingenious delineation in ſome pretty prints of it. The work is intitled, *Obſervations ſur les cauſes et les accidens de pluſieurs accouchemens laborieux.*

BUT to make uſe of the inſtrument or inſtruments which Levret recommends, requires not only a hand conſummately dextrous and ſkilful in the art, but an infinite number of perplexing precautions, as may be ſeen, p. 106, and ſeq. of his obſervations.

I WILL not here undertake a circumſtantial account, I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning ſome of them.

" There is here (ſays our author) a ve-
" ry important remark to be made, when
" you are for uſing this forceps. It is
" abſolutely neceſſary that the orifice of
" the uterus ſhould be, as it were, totally
" effaced or erazed, that is to ſay, that
" the vagina and the uterus ſhould, in a
" man-

" manner, no longer form other than one
" and the ſame cavity, from a ſort of un-
" interrupted continuity, becauſe, with-
" out that, there would be a danger of
" getting hold of the orifice of the uterus
" between the head of the child and the
" inſtrument, which would be extremely
" hurtful.

" I OUGHT (continues he) to add, that
" great attention ſhould be given to the
" attenuation of that orifice, for before it's
" intirely diſappearing, it becomes ſome-
" times ſo thin, and ſo exactly cloſe fitted
" to the child's head, that, without a
" moſt ſcrupulous examination, one might
" commit a miſtake."

BESIDES the meaſures, obſervations and remarks this practitioner urges in that place, which require infinite attentions, he adds to them the following ones.

" FIRST, when you introduce the in-
" ſtrument you are never ſure of being in
" the uterus, but, when, beſides the pre-
" caution I have above recommended, you

" feel that the axis of the inſtrument, or " the extremity of the branches, is in a " kind of vacuum. This ſign would I " own be a very equivocal one, for a perſon " that ſhould uſe this forceps without " having practiſed ſurgery * ; but ſo it will " not be for him, whoſe ſenſe of the touch " is habituated to the feeling of inſtru- " ments of different ſorts, as they enter " into empty cavities of veſſels or of hol- " low organs, or in ſhort of any cavity.

" SECONDLY, when by drawing to- " wards yourſelf the inſtrument, your are " aſſured of the preceding ſign, you will " feel a ſmall reſiſtence to a certain degree.

" THIRDLY, the blades of the inſtru- " ment ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be o- " pened out with ſome ſort of eaſe, and " what is opened out ſhould not make re- " ſiſtence enough for the blades to return " with any violence to the place whence " the opening out began.

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* As the practice of midwifery is, properly ſpeaking, under no regulation, may not this be too often the caſe?

" FOURTH-

" FOURTHLY, the blades in the inſtru-
" ment ſhould, as they open wider and wi-
" der, rather tend to augment the diame-
" ter of the void of the inſtrument than
" diminiſh it.

" FIFTHLY, theſe ſame blades ſhould,
" in their expanſion, go a little depth in
" the vagina.

" IF the man-midwife, (ſays Levret)
" perceive, that *any* of theſe favorable ſigns
" ſhould be *wanting*, he ought to *miſtruſt*
" the *ſucceſs*, and to have recourſe to his
" *ſagacity* for the remedying it."

THUS far as to the handling this forceps of Levret's, to whom the defectiveneſs of the Engliſh and French forceps had inſpired an idea of providing ſuch a ſupplement to it, from the richneſs of his own invention.

I DO not wonder however at no inſtrument pleaſing Mr. Levret ſo well as his own. Nothing is more common among the inſtrumentarians, than their diſagreement

about the make of their inſtruments. Some will have their forceps long, others ſhort, ſome ſtrait and flat, others curve: in ſhort, there is no adapting the mechaniſm of it to their various fancies, ſo apt too as they are to change. Levret complains bitterly of the inability or injuſtice of the inſtrument-makers; but by what I believe of them, very unjuſtly. The giſt of the fault is not in the inſtrument: it is in the uſe to which they are ſo often put of attempting impoſſibilities.

But now let us examine, what ſurely very competent judges have thought of this famous new forceps of Mr. Levret, which he calls *his* inſtrument.

When the book and inſtrument were preſented the Royal Society at London, it appears by a quotation inſerted by Mr. Levret himſelf, that his inſtrument was allowed to be ingenious enough, but that "there was *nothing extraordinary in it*."

Page the 10th of his preface, he has the candor to own, that he does not abſolutely

lutely pretend that ſucceſs will always attend its application, even in the caſes he points out.

PAGE the 36th, and ſeq. of his obſervations, after having exploded the forceps, and other inſtruments of the authors who have preceded him; and after having deſcribed the alterations and corrections made in the Engliſh and French tire-têtes, he gives us indeed the better opinion of his, by a fair confeſſion of the inſufficiency of them all without exception, and even of his own: by which, however, it is plain, he can mean no more than that, imperfect as they are, they all are ſtill preferable to the hands alone; but the queſtion of this ſuperiority is as conſtantly as it is ſhameleſsly begged by him, and all his fraternity of inſtrumentarians.

THUS however he expreſſes himſelf as to his own inſtruments. "This inſtrument is actually, to all appearance, now "at the very utmoſt degree of perfection, "to which it is poſſible for it to arrive, "without however having all the perfecti-

"on

" on that might be wiſhed, for the moſt
" expert practitioners in the uſe of it, a-
" gree in the opinion.

" FIRST, of the difficulty of its intro-
" duction in certain caſes.

" SECONDLY, of its ſtubbornneſs as to
" the croſſing of the blades.

" THIRDLY, of its contributing to *tear*
" the *fourchette*, or *frænum labiorum*."

[OUR author is very angry, that Boëh-
mer, who, in his critical objections, op-
poſes thoſe his own words to him, has not
added the ſubſequent lines.]

" THE correction I have made in this
" inſtrument (continues Levret) by means
" of the ſhifting axis, has rendered the
" difficulty of croſſing the blades *leſs* con-
" ſiderable, and the two following reflex-
" ions may ſerve *greatly* to overcome the
" other two inconveniences."

BUT

But ſhould it be granted to Levret, that the ſhifting axis ſomewhat leſſens the difficulty of croſſing the blades of this inſtrument, it would ſtill remain too great an one, for all that correction. The reflexions he adds, for the overcoming the other two inconveniences, carry no conviction with them; and indeed he himſelf ſeems to think ſo, by his adding afterwards (p. 99.)

"To obviate this inconvenience of tearing the *fourchette*, or the perinæum, I "cauſed to be made a *curve* forceps, as to "any thing elſe not differing, in its dimenſions, from the firſt. I took the idea of "it from the curve pinchers uſed in the "operations of lithotomy. It will be eaſier to conceive, than for me to deſcribe "the advantage it muſt gain by it. That "was not however the only end I propoſed by it, as all the good practitioners "at preſent agree on the *ſmall* efficacy of "the common forceps, in the caſe of a "head ſtuck in the paſſage when the face "is turned upwards."

It

IT is in conſequence of this opinion that Levret, in the ſequel to his obſervations, p. 301, tells us.

" I COULD (ſays he) anſwer Mr. Boëh-
" mer, that all the moſt eminent men-
" midwives are convinced, that when the
" child preſents with the face upwards, or
" turned forwards, that is to ſay, towards
" the os pubis, and that in this poſition,
" the head ſticks, the forceps commonly
" uſed can be of *no* ſervice: I do not (adds
" he) even except the one I have had made
" with a ſhifting axis. The defectiveneſs
" of theſe inſtruments, in theſe particular
" caſes, ſufficiently proves, I ſhould think
" on one hand, that the Engliſh forceps
" is not ſo good as Mr. Boëhmer ſeems to
" believe; and on the other, I preſume,
" he will be convinced, that I am not
" more ſervilely attached to my own pro-
" ductions, than thoſe of others."

THIS inſufficiency then of the common forceps has given riſe to the curve forceps of

of our author. Here follows what he further adds to what I have above (p. 427) quoted from page 99 of his work.

" THE form I have given to my forceps, " renders it then very uſeful, ſince, by " means of the curve, it lays holds of the " head with all the efficaciouſneſs that " can be found in the uſe of the common " forceps, employed on the moſt advan- " tageous poſition that the head can be " imagined ..... Notwith- " ſtanding all the corrections made in the " Engliſh and French forceps (continues " the other practitioners) if my inſtrument " is compared to all the other forceps it " will appear;

" FIRST, that it has none of their faults.

" SECONDLY, that it is very feaſible " with it to extract the head of a child " ſeparated from the body and remaining " in the uterus. This is ſo poſſible, that " all thoſe who have ſeen my inſtrument, " are unanimouſly of opinion, that no " other forceps can do as much.

" THIRD-

" THIRDLY, with my inſtrument it " appears to me poſſible to aſſiſt power- " fully the getting out the head of a child " that ſhall have remained in the uterus, " the body being intirely come out, but " of which a part is ſtill in the vagina.

" FOURTHLY, my inſtrument has this " in common with the ordinary forceps, " that it can extract a child by the head, " when this part ſhall be ſtuck in the " paſſage."

IT may well be ſaid here, that Mr. Levret attributes ſuch excellent qualities, and marvellous properties, to that ſame new forceps of his, as ought to immortalize his memory, and render his forceps univerſal over the whole earth, — if they were but proved. Ay! there lies the difficulty. Meſſieurs Rathlaw, Boëhmer, Jinckius, and the moſt notable practitioners in England, do not believe a ſyllable of the matter. Even Dr. Smellie, though I think he approves the crooked part of the

the forceps, ſpeaks ſlightly enough of it, and has even dared to falſify the inventor's aſſertion of the ne-plus-ultra of it, by altering the form, as he tells us, p. 370. "in a manner that renders it more ſim-"ple, more convenient, and leſs expen-"ſive." Mr. Levret cannot then expect we ſhall take theſe advantages for granted upon his own bare aſſertion, in the blind enthuſiaſm he manifeſts for this rare production of his genius. I do not ſo much as believe, that he was even himſelf, at times, clearly perſuaded of its excellence. At leaſt he, in ſeveral places, appears to contradict himſelf. As it is then greatly of uſe to ſhow into what a maze of errors theſe are capable of falling, who neglecting the guidance of judgment in the road of truth, wander into the wilds of imagination, I ſhall juſt point out here ſome of Levret's, at leaſt, to me, ſeeming inconſiſtencies with himſelf, but eſpecially with plain reaſon and common-ſenſe. The reader will find the notice I take of them far from digreſſive, ſerving as they do even for connexion, as well as inforcement of my arguments.

Mr.

Mr. Levret, p. 161, concludes the firſt part of his obſervation thus.

" Nota, ſome very intelligent perſons " have been pleaſed to charge me with an " opinion, which I have never had as to " curve forceps: they think, that I " believe it capable of going into the ute- " rus in ſearch of the child's head when it " is not ingaged in the orifice: and yet " I do not adviſe the uſe of it, unleſs in " thoſe caſes where the other (the com- " mon forceps) is employed, over which " it has eſſential advantages."

Here the reader will pleaſe to obſerve, that all the wonders, juſt before quoted from himſelf, are reduced only to the caſes in which it may be advantageouſly ſubſtituted to the common forceps. This, by the by, is reducing it to leſs than nothing. But how is this conſiſtent with thoſe ſame marvellous excellencies he diſplayed to us a little before, to wit? " *It is very feaſible* " *with it to extract the head of a child ſepa-* " *rate from the body, and remaining in the* " *uterus.*"

" *uterus.*" —— And again, " *with my in-*
" *ſtrument it appears to me poſſible, to aſſiſt*
" *powerfully the getting out the head of a*
" *child that ſhall have remained in the uterus,*
" *the body being entirely come out, but of*
" *which a part is ſtill in the vagina.*".

Now theſe two caſes clearly imply, that Mr. Levret's curve forceps is capable of going into the uterus in ſearch of the child's head, even when it is not engaged in the orifice: for here the caſe meant, is either that of a head remaining detachedly in the uterus, after having been ſevered or torn away from its body: or of a head not ſeparated, but remaining in the uterus after the body ſhall have come out, and part of it is ſtill in the vagina.

If therefore Mr. Levret's forceps had the advantage over the common forceps, confeſſedly inſignificant in theſe caſes, of being able to lay hold of theſe heads, he might be ſomewhat in the right to exalt it as he has done. But at preſent he muſt be wrong, which ever ſide he takes. The dilemma is ſelf-evident. He is in the wrong to de-

ny what he had certainly ſaid. He is in the wrong to complain of being taxed with an opinion, which his own allegations prove he had entertained. I therefore refer Mr. Levret from himſelf to himſelf. If he did not believe, that his curve forceps had over all the reſt the properties he ſets forth, why has he ſo confidently affirmed them? and after affirming them, why would he hinder us from thinking that he believed what he affirmed?

I AM here to obſerve, that if I have made uſe of the terms of "a head not "*ſeparated but remaining in the uterus after* "*the body ſhall have come out, and part of* "*it is ſtill in the vagina*," it is purely becauſe I would not change any thing in the expreſſion of this celebrated inſtrumentarian. It is this exactneſs of quotation, that has made me conform myſelf to his manner of ſpeaking, in my anſwer upon this difficulty. Otherwiſe, I own, I do not apprehend the propriety of his deſcription of the caſe. It ſurprized me too the more, in ſo intelligent a writer as Mr. Levret, that he ſhould repreſent to us a body

come

come out of the uterus, and yet remaining in the vagina; as if, on ſuch an occaſion, the vagina could be diſtinguiſhed from the orifice of the uterus. It is even ſtranger to me yet in Mr. Levret, for that he himſelf, in a note, p. 106, of his obſervations (by me before quoted) expreſsly ſays, that "when you are for uſing this forceps, it "is abſolutely neceſſary that the orifice "of the uterus ſhould be, as it were, to-"tally eraſed or defaced;" ſo that the vagina and orifice ſhould be laid into one. (See p. 420.)

HERE follows a much more material contradiction, rather however to common ſenſe than to Levret himſelf, to which I intreat the reader's particular attention.

OBSERVATIONS, part the 2d, p. 160. Levret gives us the following preliminary general precept.

"THERE is, ſays he, a general precept "by which it is eſtabliſhed, that a ſur-"geon ought never to thruſt inſtruments "into deep places, without guiding or

" conducting them with the hand, or with " the extremity of the fingers of that hand " that does not hold the inſtrument."

IT is then to this general axiom ſtrongly dictated by reaſon, and ſurely in no caſe more obviouſly ſo, than where the exquiſitely tender texture of the uterus proteſts againſt committing its ſafety from the cruelleſt injuries, to the neceſſarily blind random agency of an iron or ſteel inſtrument, ſo palpably ungovernable in ſo remote, intricate, and ſlippery a place by even the moſt ſkilful hand *; it is, I ſay, in excep-

* If any one doubts of this, he, in order to ſettle his opinion, needs but to peruſe the inſtructions given by Levret, and other inſtrumentarians, for the uſe eſpecially of the forceps. He will find ſuch obſcurity, ſuch intrepidity of practices upon fleſh not their own, as would make one ſhudder. The very cautions againſt *locking in* a part of the uterus between the blades of the inſtrument, prove the exiſtence of a danger no caution can ſcarce anſwer for its being able to avoid. What do you think of young or unſkilful practitioners thruſting up inſtruments at RANDOM into ſuch a place? yet Dr. Smellie, p. 288, expreſsly tells you, there is a caſe in which " *The forceps* MUST *be introduced at random.*" This however may give the practitioner boldneſs, that whatever is his fault, the poor woman it is that is ſure to ſuffer for it, and how cruelly!

tion,

tion to this ſo ſalutary general precept, that Mr. Levret will have it that there are exceptions, and in favor of what, do you think, not ſurely of the poor woman who, is to be the ſubject, or rather the victim of the experiment, but of——his moſt egregiouſly ſilly CURVE FORCEPS! Yes; it is by way of trying practices with that ſame inſtrument, that the patient is liable to be *ſpread out*, in that delicate attitude which I have above, (p. 237) deſcribed from Levret, to the peruſal of whom, for a thorough conviction of the perfect inſignificance of that inſtrument, or indeed of any of that ſort, I would recommend even the moſt ſanguine in favor of inſtruments, if they would but grant, to their own reaſon, its juſt prerogative of a previous ſuſpence of prejudice.

IN theſe caſes, however, for the which being exceptions to that excellent general rule, Levret contends; and, to do him juſtice, contends ſo auckwardly, that he rather provokes pity than indignation, at his endeavouring to eſtabliſh even ſo pernicious an error; let the reader conſider within

himſelf the part into which this forceps is to be thus blindly thruſt, at the riſque of ſo many almoſt inevitable dangers. And for what? —— In thoſe caſes it is either poſſible or not poſſible to introduce the fingers. Where they abſolutely cannot be inſinuated, the introduction of thoſe inſtruments is in all human probability big with the worſt of miſchiefs, where neither hand nor fingers can controul the effects of the iron or ſteel: which, conſequently, endanger more than they can help, and are therefore not to be uſed. But if the hand or the fingers can be inſinuated, the hand or the fingers well conducted will do the work without the help of inſtruments, which in this ſecond ſuppoſition become alſo uſeleſs.

THIS brings me to this caſe particularly, the title of which is prefixed to this ſection, that of a head ſtuck in the paſſage, which the gentlemen-midwives may perhaps ſecond Levret, in maintaining to be an exception to that admirable axiom above quoted, and maintain it purely, in evaſion of the concluſion againſt their miſerable inſtruments, which I aver need never

ver be reſorted to, nor never are, but for want of ſufficient ſkill in the manual function to terminate ſuch labors without them.

I ANSWER then to theſe inſtrumentarians, that an inſtrument, even, no more dangerous than a probe, would in ſo tender a place as I am treating of, not perhaps be quite enough exempt from a poſſibility of doing miſchief, to deſerve an exception: but as to thoſe inſtruments, which are ſo palpably likely to hurt both mother and child, to injure, in ſhort, or even to deſtroy both the mould and the caſt, they are all of them within the caſe of exception, or rather excluſion. It is then, in knowing what to do, and in the faculty of operating with the hand according to that knowledge, that the art of midwifery principally conſiſts. If inſtruments are deemed ingenious, the doing without them is ſurely not leſs ſo.

Now as to the caſe propoſed in this ſection, that of a child's head ſtuck in the paſſage, I aver, that it is not abſolutely impoſſible to terminate this delivery by the hand.

I AM even ready to demonſtrate this before any competent judges. I ſpeak by experience. I have hitherto executed with all deſirable ſucceſs this operation without any aid but that of the hand, with a little patience and proper aſſiduity. I have many and many a time ſeen it practiſed at the Hôtel Dieu, and elſewhere. I never in my whole courſe of practice ſaw ſufficient reaſon for attempting ſo hazardous an extraction, as that which is executed by means of a tire-tête. Why then thoſe needleſs terrors, thoſe ſuperfluous tortures with inſtruments, to women already in too much pain and anguiſh? care enough could not be taken to ſpare thoſe of the weaker-nerved ſex in that condition ſuch horrors, the very idea of which, to ſay no more, is enough to put them into imminent peril of their lives. All the forceps, and the reſt of the chirurgical apparatus, eſpecially the more complex inſtruments, very juſtly frighten the women, and their friends and aſſiſtents for them. Their introduction requires at once a painful, a ſhocking, and a needleſs devarication. The patients are put

put into attitudes capable of making them die with apprehenſion, if not with ſhame, from that native modeſty of theirs, which, in theſe caſes, may however be pronounced rather a wiſe inſtinct than a virtue.

How much preferable is the true midwife's practice, who will have oftenest prevented, by her knowledge and ſkill, this very ſituation! That is to ſay, if ſhe has been called in time. She knows how to prediſpoſe the paſſages, and by gentle reductions to reſtore Nature to her right road, where ſhe has been through miſpractice driven out of it, or through negligence ſuffered to deviate from it, or not preventively watched.

I HAVE never but ſeen, with reſpect to the uterus in this caſe, that it was poſſible to inſinuate firſt one finger, then another, and little by little the whole hand, not indeed a hard hand, as big as a ſhoulder of mutton, the hand of ſome luſty he-midwife, but of a midwife, ſuch as it is commonly ſeen.

WHEN

When Nature does not proceed as could be wiſhed in her labor-pains, the point is then to huſband well the ſtrength of the patient, to reſtore it where it fails, by giving her good broths and corroboratives, that do not heat, or cooling things, where heating ones have been injudiciouſly adminiſtered. She is then to lie as compoſed and tranquil as poſſible; to be cheriſhed, comforted, inheartened. There is, humanly ſpeaking, no fear but her ſtrength will return; her pains muſt not be irritated, nor herſelf harraſſed with ineffectual interference. Nature will come to herſelf again: the ſituation will, by her benign energy, change for the better, and become favorable enough, for the midwife to be able to aſſiſt her in the due time with a manual operation, that will terminate happily her delivery. It is at leaſt, with this ſucceſs, that I have delivered many, who, by the unſkilfulneſs of thoſe who had attended them, at the beginning of their pains, had been reduced to a deplorable condition, by their labor lingering ſome for upwards of ſix days.

In

In ſhort, it is extremely rare that this caſe of a head ſtuck in the paſſage ever happens, unleſs under the hands of unſkilful practitioners, or of over-dilatory or neglectful midwives, who will not have duly attended to the prognoſtics of this event; who will not have watched and taken the benefit of the favorable critical moment; who give the head time to engage itſelf, or get faſt jammed, for want of their removing the impediments to Nature's doing the reſt, or when help has been called or come too late. It may alſo be owing to thoſe who haſten too much, who precipitate the women's labor by forcing draughts, that heat, burn them up, exhauſt their ſtrength, and prematurate the coming on of the labor-pains. Some practitioners fatigue them, with making them walk, or keep them up too much.

But when the membranes are not too ſoon pierced and the waters let out, when the pains are not provoked, when time is given to Nature to form to herſelf a paſſage, not omitting the precautions I have

ſummarily

ſummarily intimated; when due care is taken to procure all poſſible eaſe of body and mind to the patient; who may vary her poſture, ſometimes lying along, ſometimes ſitting up, or well ſupported when ſhe walks: little by little the head will frank itſelf a paſſage with the weight of the body acting by an innate energy, and with a little due aſſiſtence of the midwife's art: and with this practical advertence, that, in theſe arduous caſes, much may be ſafely left to Nature, but not every thing. There are times in which ſhe cannot bear neglect, but there are none in which ſhe can bear extreme violence.

HERE the reader will not expect I ſhould in a treatiſe, purely calculated to expoſe the abuſes of midwifery, attempt to particularize either all the contingent caſes, or all the modes of operation in them. That would require a work a-part. I ſhall only then, to the four principal caſes, in which inſtruments are ſo falſely ſuppoſed neceſſary, add a ſummary accout of that of a *pendulous belly*, which is not without its difficulty.

As

As to a PENDULOUS BELLY, madam Juſtine, midwife to the Electreſs of Brandenbourg, remarks, in her Treatiſe of the Art, that ſhe knows, by experience, that ſome children turn upon their heads with their feet upwards, in women who have a large and prominent abdomen; becauſe, ſays ſhe, they are pitched too much into the fore-part of the belly, that is become pendulous. But ſhe does not explain the conſequence of this ſituation, which however does not fail of cauſing a ſevere and troubleſome labor; in that the uterus being fallen into the capacity of the hypogaſtrium, and the child being got above the os pubis, there it ſticks, and the labor-pains are ineffectual, if proper aſſiſtence is not given to Nature.

THE practice which my ſucceſs on experience encourages me to propoſe is, to have the patient lye on her back, the belly to be braced upwards with a large linnen-fold or roller, to reduce the uterus and fœtus to its better poſition in the capacity of the pelvis; but if, notwithſtanding that help,

help, the head of the child continues to reſt on the os pubis, the finger muſt be inſinuated between thoſe bones and the head, in order to make, it, little by little, retrograde into the pelvis towards the coccyx.

In every caſe then that can be imagined, ſo far as my own experience and obſervation have reached, I am authorized to aver, that the gentleneſs of the manual aſſiſtence to women is at once more agreeable to Nature, and more ſalutary than the violence of the inſtrumental practice; which not only conveys the idea, but the very reality of a butchery. While its being ſheltered under the plauſible pretext of tenderneſs and pious regard to the ſafety of the poor women and children, cannot but provoke the greater indignation, at ſeeing vile intereſt trifling thus wantonly with their lives, and add to the cruel outrages on the human perſon, the greateſt of inſults on the human underſtanding.

It cannot however have eſcaped obſervation, that while I am, with the utmoſt regard to truth, endeavouring to recommend

mend the preference of the hands to inſtruments, there is nothing I mean ſo little, as that ſome deliveries may not be accompliſhed by inſtruments, and eſpecially by that divine invention of the forceps. What I preſume to exclaim againſt, is the needleſs torture to the mother, the needleſs increaſe of danger to which ſhe and her child both are expoſed, for the ſake of that practice being tried upon them, with thoſe inſtruments, when the bare hands would be ſo much more ſafe and effectual. I could myſelf, no doubt, in many caſes, if I could be inhuman and wicked enough to dally with any thing ſo ſacred as the health or life of a woman and child, in ſome meaſure, intruſted to me, give myſelf the learned air of delivering with a CURVE FORCEPS. But in the very ſame caſes, though at the hazard of being called ignorant for my pains, I would always be ſure to do it more cleverly, leſs dangerouſly, leſs hurtfully, with only my hands. So that, without ſtraining any compariſon, the forceps may deliver indeed, but how? Why juſt as a man may, if he chuſes it, hobble round St. James's Park, on a pair of thoſe *artificial legs*,

legs * called ſtilts, when one would imagine, that the mock-elevation from them could ſcarce atone for their uncouth tottering-neſs, and that he might full as well deign to uſe his own *natural* legs.

In the ſlighter caſes then, that is to ſay, in thoſe caſes, where it is a jeſt to doubt of the hands not being the preferable inſtrument, ſince they may be truly avered to be ſo even in the moſt difficult ones, inſtrumentarians commonly go to work, *only* (pleaſe to mind that *only*) with the forceps. So that it is *only* in thoſe ſlighter caſes, where, once more nothing is more certain than that no inſtrument is wanted at all, that they find matter of triumph over their predeceſſors in theory and practice, over common ſenſe, and eſpecially over humanity. And this is that amazing, that FORTUNATE IMPROVEMENT, the ſuperhuman invention of the forceps, the philoſopher's ſtone of the modern art of mid-

* "The forceps may be introduced with great *eaſe* "and *ſafety*, like a pair of *artificial hands*, by which the "head is very *little* (if at all) *marked*, and the woman "very *ſeldom tore*." Smell. p. 257.

wifery,

mifery, found out by the male-practitioners. Yet, after all it plainly appears, that even themſelves do not rely on it in the more difficult caſes. They are then obliged to return to the *old* crotchet, or the like methods, which bad, very bad, and very inferior to the hands as they are, never however are ſuppoſed to be reſorted to, without an appearance of extremities to afford ſome color, ſome plea of humanity to employ them, in a kind of dernier reſort, to prevent a greater evil by a leſs one. Whereas, when the forceps is uſed, the cruelty of that torture it cannot but create, muſt be greatly aggravated by the conſideration of its being perfectly needleſs. But in the caſe of uſing either crotchet or forceps, or indeed any inſtruments at all, the truth is, that beſides the increaſe of danger and pain they bring, to the already too much afflicted patients, they defraud them of the more efficacious, leſs painful, and eſpecially more ſafe help of the hands alone.

THE inſtrumentarians all then agree on that inſufficiency of this pretious forceps, which occaſionally compels their recourſe

to the crotchet ſo deteſted even by themſelves. Levret, for example, confeſſes this, p. 24, of the appendix to his obſervations.

"THE crotchets (ſays he) are, gene-
" rally ſpeaking, inſtruments, the very
" ſight of which ſhocks and terrifies: but
" notwithſtanding the repugnance which
" all *good* men-midwives ought to have
" to the uſing of them, there are caſes in
" which there is no doing without them."

Now in theſe caſes, that of the monſter with two heads *, is not meant to be included, as Levret himſelf afterwards explains himſelf. If then there are ſuch caſes as neceſſitate a recourſe to crotchets, it will, I preſume, be allowed me, that they can be no other than thoſe which render the delivery the moſt laborious. What thoſe caſes are, I have, from after the in-

* In this caſe of a monſter of two heads, which happens ſo rarely as that it might almoſt be reputed null or of no conſideration, *once more*, it is neither a midwife's buſineſs, nor even of one of the common men-practitioners of midwifery. Application ſhould be inſtantly made to one of the beſt and ableſt ſurgeons procurable, for reaſons too obvious to need ſpecification.

ſtrumenta-

ſtrumentarians themſelves reduced to the four capital ones, I have above ſet forth, without reckoning the pendulous belly. At leaſt I know of no other ſituations than thoſe, that can produce the very ſevere labors, nor do I believe that the inſtrumentarians know any other, or they would tell us ſo. Now if, in the more difficult of thoſe caſes, there is no doing without the crotchet, what becomes of the prodigious merit of the forceps, ſo inſignificant in caſes of the greateſt need, and ſo ſuperfluous in thoſe others, where there being no occaſion at all for it, it muſt be the moſt inhuman wantonneſs to employ it?

HERE can you be with too much inſiſtence deſired to obſerve the ſolemn banter, in ſuch a matter of life and death too, of theſe kind, tender-hearted modern inſtrumentarians! they are ſo tranſported with ſtark love and compaſſion to the poor women and children, that they do not know what they are about; they fall into the moſt palpable contradictions, and would have even Hippocrates, and the antients, appear as ſo many bloody-minded Canni-

bals compared to them. Hippocrates, it ſeems, and the antients, according to the beſt of their apprehenſion, in points of midwifery, preſcribed the crotchet, in no caſe however but where the child was certainly dead, which, by the by, is next to the not preſcribing it at all, ſince the aſcertainment of that death is ſcarce not impoſſible. So becauſe they recommended this practice in the laſt neceſſity, the ingeniouſneſs of the modern inſtrumentarians was "* ſtimulated to contrive ſome *gentler* method of bringing along the head" —— without any neceſſity at all; that is to ſay, in the minor difficulties, for the crotchet of the old practice is, to this inſtant, even with them, left in poſſeſſion of the greater ones. Thus was produced the forceps, that prodigiouſly bright refinement upon the dull antients, and goes on improving without end under the wiſe heads of our gentlemen-midwives. But if the modern Genius of arts and ſciences has no better improvement than this to boaſt over Hippocrates and the antients, may the in-

* Smellie, p. 248.

ſtinct

ſtinct of ſelf-preſervation defend mothers, and, in them, their children, from being the trophy-poſts of their victorious atchievements! may the midwives continue in their happy ignorance of their curious devices! may they ever preſerve a due averſion from indeed all inſtruments whatever! for they are all needleſs and pernicious ſubſtitutes to the hands. May none of them, eſpecially in any labors committed to their conduct, prove ſo criminally falſe to their ſacred truſt, as through negligence, or through an intereſted deſigning reliance upon inſtruments, to repair their failures or miſpractice, ſlacken their attention to their duty, or afford, by their defective performance, an excuſe, though a fallacious one, for reſorting to inſtruments, when ſkilful hands are incomparably more fit for a remedy or retrieval!

I CANNOT then too ardently wiſh, for the women not to be ſo cruel to themſelves, and to their ſo naturally dear children within them, as inconſiſtently to ſuffer their aim at ſuperior ſafety, to be the very ſnare that betrays them into the greater

danger, and often worſt of conſequences, from thoſe male-practitioners, to whom that aim drives them for recourſe; while that examination they owe to ſo intereſting a point would iſſue, or deſerve to iſſue, in reſcuing them from ſuch a ſhameful ſubjection of body and ſpirit to a band of mercenaries, who palm themſelves upon them, under cover of their crotchets, knives, ſciſſors, ſpoons, pinchers, fillets, *terebra occulta*, *ſpeculum matricis*, all which, and eſpecially their *tire-têtes*, or *forceps*, whether Flemiſh, Dutch, Iriſh, French or Engliſh, bare or covered, long or ſhort, ſtrait or crooked, flat or rounding, windowed or not windowed, are totally uſeleſs, or rather worſe than good for nothing, being never but dangerous, and often deſtructive.

NATURE, if her expulſive efforts are but, in due time, and when requiſite, gently and ſkilfully ſeconded by the hands alone, will do more, and with leſs pain than all the art of the inſtrumentarians, with their whole armory of deadly weapons. The original and beſt inſtrument, as well as the antienteſt, is the natural hand. As yet

yet no human invention comes near it, much leſs excells it: and in that part it is that the women have incomparably and evidently the advantage over the men for the operations of midwifery, in which dexterity is ever ſo much more efficacious than downright ſtrength.

And, indeed, let every requiſite faculty for the aſſiſtence of lying-in women be well conſidered, and the reſulting determination cannot but be, that in the common labors, where the men themſelves are either ſimple by-ſtanders or receivers of the child, or operate with the hand only, they are the very beſt of them, not comparable to a common midwife, and in thoſe caſes, in which they pretend the uſe of inſtruments neceſſary, hardly better than the worſt one. So that, not leſs than juſtly ſpeaking, they are not receivable, either as ſubſtitutes, or even as ſupplements to midwives.

The art of midwifery then, in its management by women, carries with it, in the recommendation of order, modeſty, propriety, eaſe, diminution of pain and danger, all

the marks of the providential care of Nature. It is imaged by the incubation of a brood-hen, aſſiduouſly watching over her charge, and tenderly hatching it with her genial heat. Whereas the function of this art, officiated by men, has ever ſomething barbarouſly uncouth, indecent, mean, nauſeous, ſhockingly unmanly and out of character: and, above all, of lame or imperfect in it. It ſtrongly ſuggeſts the idea of the chicken-ovens in Egypt, kept by a particular ſet of people, who make a livelihood of the ſecret, which they, it ſeems, ingroſs of that curious art of hatching of eggs by a forced artificial heat: a practice, which, like the other refinements of dung-beds for the ſame purpoſe, or that of committing the rearing or education of the chickens to * "*cocks*, to *capons*, or to *artificial wooden mothers*," may ſound indeed vaſtly ingenious; but beſides the numbers that periſh the victims of thoſe experiments, many of the productions of ſuch methods of hatching are obſerved to be maimed, wanting a leg or a wing, or

* See Reaumur's art of hatching domeſtic fowls, &c.

ſome

ſome way damaged or defective. The compariſon breaks indeed in that, at leaſt, the grown hens themſelves eſcape damage, which is not often the caſe of mothers under thoſe heteroclite beings the men-midwives; or, if they do eſcape, it is no thanks to thoſe operators, but to the prevalence of Nature over their pragmatical intervention, ſo fit only to diſturb, thwart, or oppoſe her effects, and in every ſenſe to deprive the unhappy women that truſt them of her common benefit.

But while ſuperior conſiderations of humanity ſo juſtly intercede for the mothers, while I ſtrenuouſly contend for the preference to be, without heſitation, due to the mother over the child, eſpecially in that dreadful dilemma, where one muſt be ſacrificed to the ſafety of the other; ſuppoſing ſuch a dreadful alternative ever to exiſt, which I much doubt, or at leaſt, not to exiſt ſo often as it is raſhly taken for granted, and even then, where the effects do not always follow the reſolution taken thereon, ſince, though the child is always certainly loſt, the mother is far from

always

always ſaved, when, by a judicious preventiveneſs in practice, neither of them might perhaps have been ſo much as in jeopardy; while, I ſay, I plead for the preferable attention to the mothers, I hope no mothers will think me the worſe intentioned towards them, for giving the lives of their children the ſecond place in my tender concern for the ſafety of both.

And ſurely never was a time, when children more required the interceſſion of humanity in their favor. Mothers can ſpeak for themſelves. But the poor infants, ſo often precluded, by violence, from the pity-moving faculty of their own cry, have nothing but the cry of Nature to plead for them. A cry, the liſtening to which is prevented by thoſe vain imaginary terrors, inſpired by deſigning Art in the ſervice of Intereſt, through which Nature is ſeduced to act againſt herſelf, and deliver herſelf up to her greateſt enemies.

In ſhort, one would imagine, that all the rage of cruelty was unchained, and let looſe againſt eſpecially thoſe tender innocents, born or unborn.

Among

AMONG the poor, particularly as to thoſe infants caſt upon the publick charity, a barbarouſly premature ablactation, under a pretext ſo eaſily foreknown to be as falſe as it is fatal, of bringing them up by hand for cheapneſs-ſake, has deſtroyed incredible numbers.

AMONG the rich, or thoſe able enough to pay for the learned murder of their offſpring, how many of their children, even before they have well got hold of life, in this, literally ſpeaking as to them, iron age, encounter their death or wounds, ſtuck in the brain by a crotchet, or cruſhed by a forceps, to ſay nothing of their being now and then ingeniouſly ſtrangled in the nooſe of a fillet!

AND thoſe horrors proceed unchecked and unexploded, and in what a nation? a nation, that values herſelf upon the diſtinction of profound thinking: a nation that, beſides that intereſt ſhe has in common with all other well-governed nations, to protect and promote population, ſtands,

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be it ſaid, in that true ſpirit of juſtice, which as much diſdains to pay a fulſome compliment, as good ſenſe ever will to receive it, moreover eminently diſtinguiſhed above them all, for producing a race of natives, one would think could hardly be too numerous, ſince they are the moſt remarkable in the known world for courage, for perſonal beauty, and for many other liberal gifts of Nature, among which ſurely not the leaſt is, that inborn ſpirit of liberty, to which they owe the honorable acquiſition of ſo many additional advantages.

CAN it then be too ſtrongly recommended to the women eſpecially, at leaſt, to examine whether their notion of ſuperior ſafety under the hands of a man, in their lying-in, bears upon the ſolid foundation of Nature, or merely on the treacherouſly weak one of a deluſive opinion? an opinion that owes its exiſtence to fears cruelly played upon, and turned to account by deſigning Intereſt. If thoſe then of them who are under the force of prejudice, or governed by habit, or by both at once, would, on a point that concerns themſelves and children ſo nearly,

nearly, assume liberty enough of mind to shake off the dangerous yoke, they would undoubtedly find it better and safer to listen to that salutary instinct of Nature so authorized by reason, which inspires them with that repugnance to submit themselves in the manner they must do that submit themselves to men-midwives, who have the impudence to call that repugnance a "*false modesty*:" as if that Modesty could not be a true one, a foolish one I am sure it could not be, that should murmur at being so cruelly sacrificed to such a bubble's bargain as it is, by those innocents, who, over-persuaded by a deceitful promise of more effectual aid, too often embrace a torturous and a shameful death, for which, to add ridicule to horror, they are expected to pay their executioners larger fees than to one of their own sex for a more decent, a more safe, and always a less painful delivery.

MAY the women then, for their own sakes, for the sake of their children, cease to be the dupes, sure as they are to be in some measure the victims of that scientific jargon,

jargon, employed to throw its learned duſt in their eyes, and to blind them to their danger or perdition! may they, in ſhort, ſee through that cloud of hard words uſed by pedants, whoſe intereſt it is to impoſe themſelves upon them: a cloud, which is oftener the cover-ſhame of ignorance, than the vehicle of true knowledge, and perhaps oftener yet the maſk of mercenary quackery, than a proof of medical ability!

As to the writings of the men-midwives eſpecially, I dare aver, that, though there may be here and there ſome very juſt theoretic notions, borrowed from able phyſicians and ſurgeons, nothing is more contemptible than moſt of their practical rules; what is tolerable in them being moſt probably got from midwives, but ſo disfigured with their own abſurd ſophiſtications, that I ſhould heartily pity any woman, ſubjected to have her labor governed by ſuch, as ſhould have no better guidance than their ridiculous inſtructions.

THEN it is that a ſenſible woman would, in defence of her own life, or of any life that

that ſhe holds dear to her, in the caſe of needing the aid of midwifery, view with equal diſdain, with equal horror, either the rough manly * he-midwife, that in the

* If any of my readers imagine that I have, in my objection to the men-midwives, exagerated matters, I intreat of them to conſider the following quotation from a *male-practitioner*, from Daventer, who endeavoured, as much as Nature would allow him, to be a good midwife, however he fell ſhort of it. Theſe are his own words tranſlated, from p. 11. of the French quarto edition.

" Can any thing be more ſhocking to the mother, " and to thoſe about her, than to ſee a man in li- " quor, ſcarce knowing what he is about, diveſted of " all compaſſion, of all ſentiment of humanity, his " hands *armed* with a *knife*, a *crotchet*, a *pair* of *pinchers*, " or other *horrible* inſtruments, come to the ASSIS- " TENCE of a woman in agonies, begin, for his firſt " atteſtation of ſkill, by *wounding* the *mother*, then go " on to *deſtroy* the *child*, bring it away piece-meal, " with exquiſite tortures to the woman, and, after all, " grumble in the notion, that he could not be PAID " enough for ſuch a fine ſpot of work? had not ſuch " better at once take on to be *butchers* or *hangmen*, than " treat thus the image of God, and render the pro- " feſſion odious?"

Have I any where ſaid any thing STRONGER than this? Daventer, however, certainly did not mean by it to inſinuate, that *all* men-midwives anſwered intirely this deſcription; no, nor I neither. But leaving the brutality

the midſt of his boiſterous operation, in a miſtimed barbarous attempt at waggery or wit, will aſk a woman, in a hoarſe voice, "if ſhe has a mind to be rid of her bur- "then," or the pretty lady-like gentleman-midwife, that with a quaint formal air, and a gratious ſmirk, primming up his mouth, in a ſoft fluted tone, aſſures her, and lies all the while like a tooth-drawer, that his inſtruments will neither hurt nor mark herſelf nor child but a little, or perhaps not at all. (See p. 448.)

THIS laſt character, if leſs brutal than the other, is not perhaps the leaſt dangerous, ſince the practice being at bottom the ſame, pregnant conſequently with the

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brutality out of the queſtion, the miſchief and mercenarineſs of them all differ perhaps in no very conſiderable degree. Pleaſe to remark in the following quotation, the DOCTRINE and practice of that famous *man-midwife* Peu. "He determines himſelf, without "much ceremony, to the *breaking* a child's *arm* or a "*thigh*, when he *imagines* this *operation* will facilitate the "delivery, and that, on the PRINCIPLE of its being "*eaſy*, to repair ſuch *damages* of *new-born* infants. For "the ſame reaſon the luxation of a jaw-bone gives him "no ſcruple." (Tranſlator of Daventer's Preface.)

ſame

ſame miſchief, the gentleneſs of the inſinuation gives the leſs warning, and paves the way for the admiſſion of a handling not the leſs rough for the ſmoothneſs of the addreſs. But is there any ſuch thing as polite murder? is miſchief the leſs miſchief for being perpetrated with an air of kindneſs? well conſidered it is but the more provoking. The male-practitioners then are not quite in the wrong, to preſume as they do upon the weakneſs of the women's underſtanding, ſince they can ſo groſsly paſs upon them their needleſs cruelties, under ſo inconſiſtent and falſe a color as that of a tender compaſſion. Thus to all the reſt of the ſhame to which they put them, they add that of ſo palpable an impoſition in that flimſy cover of the mean intereſt, which is ſo probably the real motive at bottom of their taking up a function, to which they were never called by Nature, nor by any neceſſity, unleſs, perhaps, of their own.

In the mean time, the truth is, that, in vain, would the men, by way of ſparing the women the terror of their maſculine figure, upon thoſe delicate occaſions

of officiating, and to appear the more natural in the buſineſs, aim at an occaſional effemination of their dreſs, manner and air. They can never in eſſentials atone for their intereſted intruſion into an office, ſo clearly a female one, that, if but only as to the manual diſcharge of it, not even the qualifying them for the opera, would, perhaps, ſufficiently emaſculate them.

Conclusion of the Second and Last Part.

Here, confeſſing my juſt apprehenſions of not having fulfilled the promiſe of my title-page; there will not, I hope, to that reproach of my deficient powers in the performance, be added the undeſerved ones of vanity or injuſtice in the deſign or conduct of my feeble eſſay.

For as to vanity, or any preſumption, on my part, of any thing ſo weak, ſo unauthoritative as my repreſentation, having any chance to remove the abuſes, not however the leſs exiſtent for that incapacity of mine to remove them, my knowledge of

of the world would alone defend me from ſo ridiculouſly wild a thought. I am but too well aware of the tenaciouſneſs of eſpecially falſe prejudice in moſt minds, where it has once gained entrance, and with whom prepoſſeſſion is ever eleven points of the right. I have then purely had in view the diſcharge of that duty, incumbent on every member of human ſociety, to oppoſe ſuch errors as appear to be pernicious to the good of it. In that light I have beheld the growing practice of the inſtrumentarians, and in that ſincere belief I have hazarded the publication of my ſentiments, without ſurely pretending to any authority over the opinion of others. That I chearfully leave to every one's reaſon, who is capable of reaſon. And to write for others than the rational, would be only labor deſervedly loſt.

As to injuſtice, I am, at leaſt, clear of that of partiality to my own ſex. I grant and lament as much as any one the incompetency of but too many of the midwives. The number of ſuch cannot be too little. But then would the baniſhing them out of the practice be preferable to the having

them better taught, eſpecially ſince there is nothing but what is ſo much worſe to put in their room, men and inſtruments? What occaſion too for ſuch a dangerous extremity? For as the deficiency is evident, ſo are the cauſes: which are not only the want of ſufficient care in the training and education of women to this profeſſion, but the actual diſcouragement, which muſt grow every day greater and greater, by the incroachments of the inſtrumentarians, whoſe plea for ſupplanting them will be conſequently ſtrengthened by that alarming ſcarcity of capable midwives, which themſelves will have ſo much contributed to create. Theſe being then the principal cauſes, and well known to be ſo, the remedies are not obſcure, nor hard to attain.

A GOOD education eſpecially is of great importance, to accompliſh what Nature has already gone ſo great a way in, by her giving in many reſpects to the women ſuch a ſuperior aptitude for the buſineſs. Capable midwives would much help to form good female pupils; and the lying-in hoſpitals eſpecially might be made highly uſeful

ful to ſo deſirable an end. But ſurely as to the practical part of midwifery in theſe hoſpitals, it ought not to be under the direction of men, whoſe intereſt it ſhould be, only to form the women ſo deficiently, as that themſelves might be the leſs unneceſſary; to form them, in ſhort, more for their own ſervice, than for that of the public. That temptation being removed, the female-practitioners could not receive too reſpectfully from the ſurgeons lectures or inſtructions, any lights in anatomy relative to their theoretic proficiency. But to nothing ſhould they be more conſtantly and effectually excited, than to perfect themſelves in the manual operation; and indeed, in general, ſo to capacitate themſelves for their function, as to prove and eſtabliſh the perfect inutility of all inſtruments whatever. Nor will it be a difficult taſk for a woman to acquire a ſuperiority in her hands to the moſt boaſted of thoſe unnatural ſubſtitutes. This is the true way of laudably diſarming the inſtrumentarians, and of thereby depriving them of the only ſhadow of a pretence they have for ſupplanting the women, and invading the female province, of which invaſion it is ſo probable, that

not

not the cauſe they plead, but the pay they ſquint at, is the real motive.

As to the diſcouragement of proper women from applying themſelves to the profeſſion, it can only ceaſe by the concurring of thoſe, on whom the choice out of either ſex occaſionally depends, to reſtore things to their antient channel: and that will in courſe, for their own ſakes, follow on their ceaſing to be impoſed upon by the falſe pretences of the men-practitioners. But this is a point upon which I am too much a party to be heard, though even as no more than an advocate, and much leſs as a judge. All I ſhall then preſume to ſay is, that I very readily leave the deciſion of the queſtion to Reaſon, that inward oracle in every one's breaſt; an oracle, which, in a cauſe ſo intereſting to human Nature, can never return a falſe anſwer, where conſulted by thoſe who deſerve to find the truth by ſincerely ſeeking it, with a firm deſign to ſacrifice to it the poor vanity of defending a prejudice, or any other intereſt of the paſſions. And ſurely there can hardly exiſt a point of more capital importance

to

to Society, than the determining, what however one would imagine not very difficult to determine, on which ſide in this profeſſion of midwifery particularly, the ſuperiority of auxiliary power may be expected, on that, where there is evidently a great deal of Nature, aſſiſted with a little but a competency of Art, or on that, where what there is of Art is moſt barbarouſly abuſed, and without any Nature at all.

The END.

(Sept., 1886, 20,000)

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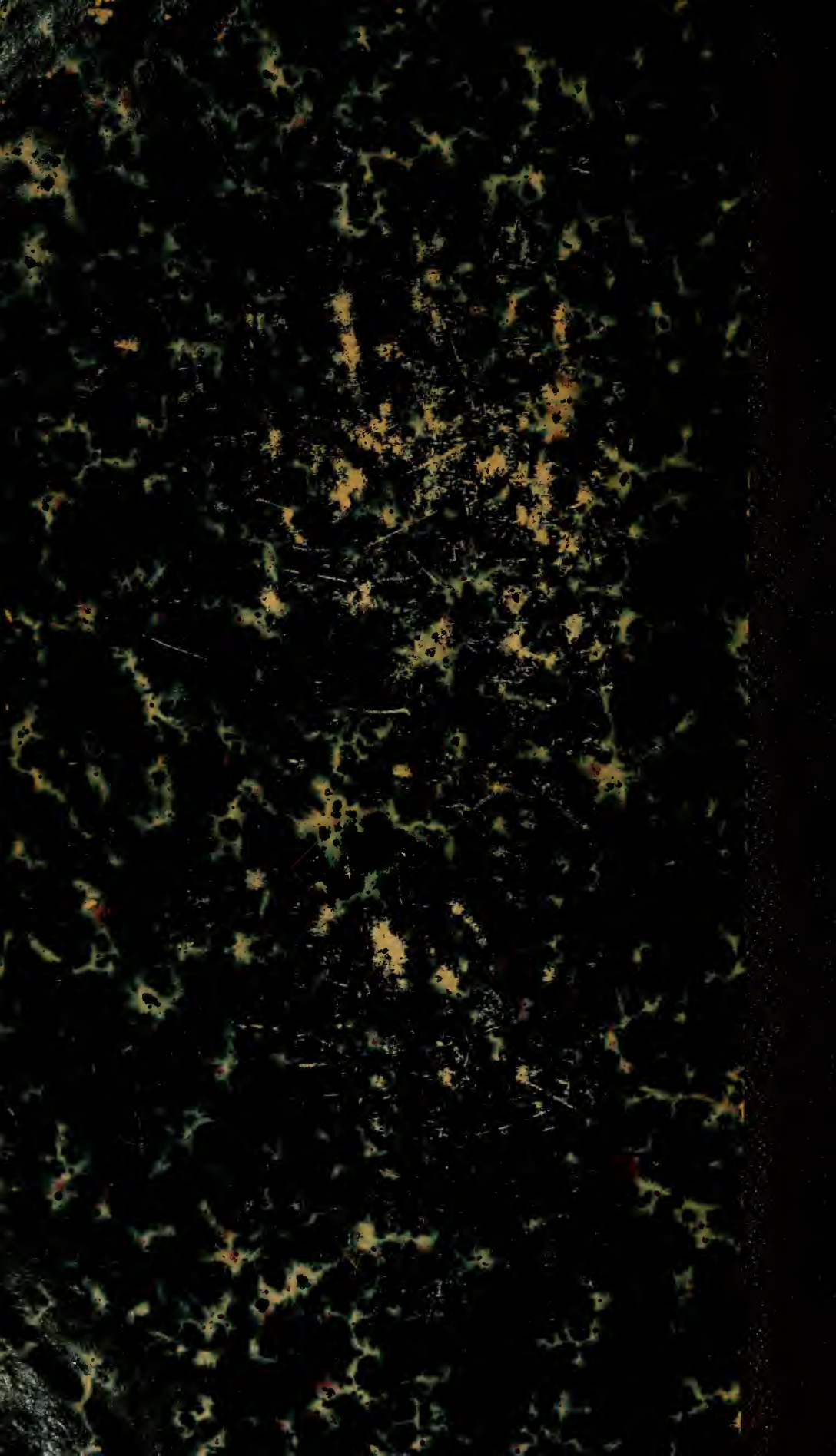
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